

DECEMBER 1993

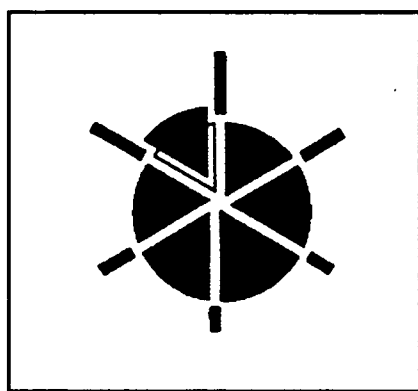
APPROVED AND ADOPTED

# General Plan Refinement

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## Goals And Objectives

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...ON WEDGES AND CORRIDORS

*MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY,  
MARYLAND*



**INTERIM  
EDITION**

*Published by the*  
**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

## ABSTRACT

**TITLE:** Approved and Adopted General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County

**AUTHOR:** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

**SUBJECT:** Amendment to *A General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties* (1964), as amended, and the 1969 *Updated General Plan for Montgomery County* (approved in 1970), as amended

**DATE:** December 1993

**PLANNING AGENCY:** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

**NUMBER OF PAGES:** 103

**ABSTRACT:** This document amends the *General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties* (1964) and contains the proposed amendments to the goals, objectives, and strategies of the 1969 *Updated General Plan for Montgomery County* (approved in 1970). This 1993 Refinement does not replace the 1964 General Plan; it reaffirms its Wedge and Corridor concepts and replaces the guidelines that were expressed in the 1969 General Plan Update. This Plan provides the framework for the physical development of Montgomery County. The goals, objectives, and strategies are intended to be a guide for decision making affecting the future of Montgomery County. This Plan also complies with the seven visions of the Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992.

**Approved and Adopted Amendment**

**GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT OF THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

**December 1993**

An amendment to  
*A General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District  
in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties (1964)*, as amended  
and the  
*Updated General Plan for Montgomery County*  
(approved in 1970),  
as amended  
and compliance with the  
Maryland Economic Development,  
Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992

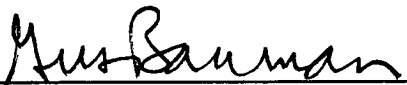
**The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission**


8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760


## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

This 1993 General Plan Refinement, an amendment to the General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery County and Prince George's County, as amended, and the 1969 Updated General Plan for Montgomery County (approved in 1970); has been approved by the Montgomery County Council, sitting as the District Council, by Resolution No. 12-1351 on November 2, 1993, and has been adopted by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission by Resolution No. 93-23 on December 15, 1993, after a duly advertised public hearing pursuant to Article #28 of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

### THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

  
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Vice Chairman

  
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## **THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties; the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two Counties.

The Commission has three major functions:

- (1) The preparation, adoption, and, from time to time, amendment or extension of the General Plan for the physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District;
- (2) The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system; and
- (3) In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire County public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the county government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

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\* Ruthann Aron succeeded Richmond M. Keeney. Mr. Keeney served on the Planning Board during the first phases of the General Plan Refinement process.

## NOTICE TO READERS

The General Plan Refinement community participation and public education efforts were designed to provide opportunities for meaningful dialogue with interested citizens throughout Montgomery County. These efforts were intended to be as far reaching as possible to involve those familiar with the planning process and those who were not.

Beginning with a day-long symposium entitled, "The General Plan...Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," the stage was set for a year of outreach activities intended to involve citizens in the Refinement process and to educate citizens to increase their knowledge of the General Plan and planning in Montgomery County. In October 1991, approximately 250 people, including many of the original authors and subsequent implementers of the General Plan, gathered to establish an understanding of the "Wedges and Corridors" concept and accompanying goals and objectives.

To spread the word about the General Plan Refinement to the largest number of people, a four-page insert to the *County Connection* was used. Approximately 85,000 copies of this newspaper were distributed explaining the process and how to participate, highlighting the goals and objectives of the 1969 General Plan Update, and describing how the County has changed in the past two decades.

Beginning in November 1991, a series of eight community workshops were held at dispersed locations throughout the County. Each workshop focused on a different goal and related objectives of the General Plan Refinement. These workshops provided an opportunity for information exchange between citizens and Planning Department staff prior to the preparation of the Staff Draft. Comments received were shared with the Planning Board at eight subsequent worksessions on draft language for each goal. A special hotline telephone number was created to provide current information on dates, times, and locations of these meetings.

An important focus of this public participation effort was outreach to citizens who had not traditionally been involved in planning issues but who could be affected by the General Plan Refinement. Two groups that were specifically targeted were minority populations and high school students. Mailings were made to approximately 300 leaders of various minority organizations. Several meetings were held with these leaders to better understand how these sectors of the population could become involved and to hear their ideas on the future of the County. Flyers about the General Plan Refinement were prepared in Spanish for distribution as well.

A major effort was initiated to offer high school students an opportunity to be involved in planning for the future of Montgomery County. Staff visited a dozen different classes at six high schools throughout the County to obtain a cross-section of student views. One high school class presented recommendations to the Planning Board on the General Plan Refinement.

Many outreach methods were used to keep the public informed about the Refinement: posters encouraging participation were distributed to all libraries, government centers, recreation centers, and large grocery stores; notices of all meetings were included in the Planning Board's Agenda, which is mailed to approximately 2,500 people weekly; flyers announcing the workshops and worksessions were distributed at the government centers and regional libraries; press releases were prepared on various aspects of the project; and videos were available to the public on topics relevant to the General Plan. In addition, most of the Planning Board's worksessions were televised on cable TV, as were other special feature broadcasts about the Refinement.

Upon conclusion of the eight community workshops and Planning Board worksessions, Planning Department staff developed a Staff Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives in July 1992. This Draft was then reviewed and edited by the Planning Board and presented to the public for comments as the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft in August 1992. A public hearing and two Planning Board worksessions were held on the General Plan Refinement during the fall of 1992. The oral and written testimonies of more than 45 citizens, civic associations, business organizations, County groups, and public officials were considered by the Planning Board, which completed its work on the Final Draft in January 1993.

The results of these efforts are contained in two documents: the Final Draft Refinement and a Supplement. The Final Draft Refinement incorporates suggested changes presented in public testimony on the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft and also includes new sections that highlight the Plan's compliance with the Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992, in addition to other Planning Board revisions. The Supplement provides important background information on the development of the General Plan Refinement. The Supplement includes a fact sheet for each of the seven General Plan Refinement goals and a fact sheet that focuses on general changes in Montgomery County since the 1969 General Plan Update. Together, these fact sheets examine changes and trends to the physical, social, and economic development of Montgomery County during the past two decades. Graphs, maps, charts, and text are used to highlight this information.



## THE GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT PROCESS

### AN AMENDMENT TO THE 1964 GENERAL PLAN AND THE 1969 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

**Staff Draft Amendment** - This document is prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department for presentation to the Montgomery County Planning Board. A Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment is then prepared for approval to go to public hearing by the Planning Board. The Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft incorporates those preliminary changes to the Staff Draft that the Planning Board considers appropriate.

**Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment** - This document is a formal proposal to amend the General Plan prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. It is prepared for the purpose of receiving public hearing testimony. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board. Before proceeding to publish a Planning Board (Final) Draft, the Planning Board holds a public hearing. After the close of the record of this public hearing, the Planning Board holds open worksessions to review the testimony and to revise the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment.

**Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment** - This document is the Planning Board's recommended Amendment. Since October 1, 1992, changes in the Regional District Act require the Planning Board to transmit it to the County Council with copies to the County Executive. The Regional District Act then requires the County Executive, within sixty days, to prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board's (Final) Draft Amendment to the County Council. The Executive may also make any other comments and recommendations on the Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment within the sixty-day period.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council may hold a public hearing to receive public testimony on the Amendment. After the close of record of this public hearing, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee (PHED) holds open worksessions to review the testimony and revise the Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment. The County Council, after its worksessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment as revised.

**Adopted Amendment** - The amendment approved by the County Council is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the General Plan Refinement officially amends the various master or sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER ONE - VISION FOR THE FUTURE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>DEFINITION OF THE GENERAL PLAN</b>	<b>2</b>
Context of the General Plan	4
"... On Wedges and Corridors"	5
<b>IMPETUS FOR THE GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
Citizen Committees	8
Planning Studies	8
Significant Change	8
<b>LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF THE GENERAL PLAN</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT ADOPTION PROCESS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE MARYLAND PLANNING ACT OF 1992</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>GEOGRAPHIC COMPONENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT</b>	<b>14</b>
The Urban Ring	19
The Corridor	22
The Suburban Communities	25
The Wedge	29
<b>IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES FOR THE GENERAL PLAN</b>	<b>34</b>
Challenge 1: Maintaining Wedges and Corridors	34
Challenge 2: Guiding Market Preferences	34
Challenge 3: Managing Limited Resources	35
Challenge 4: Providing For Future Mobility	35
Challenge 5: Seeking Regional Solutions Through Regional Cooperation	36
Challenge 6: Encouraging Cooperation With Municipalities	38
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>38</b>
 <b>CHAPTER TWO - GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES</b>	 <b>39</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>LAND USE</b>	<b>41</b>
Scope	41
Key Concepts	41
Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update	42
Interrelationship with Other Goals	42
Land Use - Goal, Objectives, Strategies	45
<b>HOUSING</b>	<b>51</b>
Scope	51
Key Concepts	51
Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update	51
Interrelationship with Other Goals	53
Housing - Goal, Objectives, Strategies	55

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont'd.)

<b>ECONOMIC ACTIVITY</b> .....	59
Scope .....	59
Key Concepts .....	59
Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update .....	60
Interrelationship with Other Goals .....	61
Economic Activity - Goal, Objectives, Strategies .....	63
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b> .....	68
Scope .....	68
Key Concepts .....	68
Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update .....	68
Interrelationship with Other Goals .....	69
Transportation - Goal, Objectives, Strategies .....	72
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> .....	76
Scope .....	76
Key Concepts .....	76
Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update .....	77
Interrelationship with Other Goals .....	78
Environment - Goal, Objectives, Strategies .....	81
<b>COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND DESIGN</b> .....	92
Scope .....	92
Key Concepts .....	92
Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update .....	93
Interrelationship with Other Goals .....	93
Community Identity and Design - Goal, Objectives, Strategies .....	95
<b>REGIONALISM</b> .....	99
Scope .....	99
Key Concepts .....	100
Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update .....	100
Interrelationship with Other Goals .....	101
Regionalism - Goal, Objectives, Strategies .....	103

## TABLE OF FIGURES

### Figure

1	YEAR 2000 WEDGES AND CORRIDORS REGIONAL CONCEPT .....	6
2	WEDGES AND CORRIDORS, GEOGRAPHIC COMPONENTS .....	17
3	THE URBAN RING .....	19
4	THE CORRIDOR .....	23
5	THE SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES .....	26
6	THE WEDGE .....	29
7	PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM .....	37

## CHAPTER ONE

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# VISION FOR THE FUTURE

## INTRODUCTION

In July 1991, the Montgomery County Council endorsed the Montgomery County Planning Board's proposal to refine the goals and objectives of the County's 1969 *Updated General Plan for Montgomery County* (approved in 1970). That General Plan Update was based on the 1964 document ...On Wedges and Corridors, a General Plan for the Maryland - Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. This document represents the culmination of that Refinement effort.

This document amends the 1964 General Plan and the 1969 Update. It stands alone as total replacement for the Goals and objectives of the Plan and Update, providing a 21st century vision for Montgomery County. It retains the overall concepts and all other aspects of both the Plan and the Update.

The General Plan Refinement reaffirms the Wedges and Corridors concept as a framework for development in Montgomery County. In addition, the Refinement further defines the components of the Wedges and Corridors concept that have evolved during the past two decades. While the Refinement gives guidance to the entire County, that guidance is not binding upon those municipalities that have independent planning, zoning, and subdivision authority.

The General Plan is a guide for land use and development in Montgomery County. If the goals and objectives of the Refinement are to be realized, funding will be necessary for both capital and operating costs. While this General Plan Refinement recognizes its impact on future fiscal resources, it does not direct how those resources are to be obtained, or the timing of expenditures. It clearly leaves these judgments to future policy decisions.

Funding is needed to serve many purposes. New development requires a variety of new facilities. County policy requires that those facilities be provided in a timely manner in order for development to proceed. All facilities already in place require continuing maintenance and annual operating budgets to ensure their useful service, and thereby the continued success of the surrounding land uses. In addition, there are unmet capital needs in developed areas of the County. The presence of viable public facilities contributes to the quality of life in Montgomery County. Viable public facilities are essential components of the Centers concept described within the General Plan and serve to implement the overall Wedge and Corridors pattern.

## **DEFINITION OF THE GENERAL PLAN**

The General Plan is a comprehensive framework for guiding physical development and managing limited resources in Montgomery County, Maryland. It is a policy document whose concepts are general in nature. As the County's longest-range and most visionary document, it provides a broad image of how the County will evolve in the future and establishes a frame of reference for decisions to make that vision become a reality.

To blaze a reasonable path into the future, the General Plan must:

- identify the general location, function, intensity, and pattern of various land uses;
- provide direction for integrating future development and redevelopment with existing development;
- address the relationship between human activity and the built and natural environments;
- address the varying needs and desires of a diverse and changing County population and economic community; and
- promote connections among all areas of the County and between the County and the region.

The General Plan is an evolving and dynamic document that provides the basis for more specific area master plans, functional plans, and sector plans. Each master plan, sector plan, and functional plan, after approval by the County Council and adoption by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, constitutes an amendment to the General Plan.

The General Plan is specific enough to provide clear guidance for realizing its vision, while retaining enough flexibility to respond to unforeseeable circumstances as they arise. To achieve this, the General Plan Refinement presents broad brush concepts.

Although the General Plan Refinement provides general guidance for land use and public investment in Montgomery County, it does not recommend detailed zoning patterns for the County, nor does it provide development guidelines for specific parcels of land. The Refinement loosely describes the character and location of four geographic components and a regional transportation network. It does not delve deeply into County governance beyond the purview of land use planning. Social services, education, and other such issues are not addressed. In addition, the Refinement does not suggest specific floor-to-area ratios, development caps, road alignments, or specific locations or timetables for the provision of public facilities.

Flexibility in implementation, not rigidity, will allow the General Plan Refinement to guide development into a future that is not fully known.

The General Plan Refinement seeks a harmonious balance of land uses. One principal element of that balance is the relationship between housing and job opportunities. A reasonable mix of housing and jobs encourages shorter commuting distances, allows the residential and commercial sectors to share the local tax burden, and moderates pressures on housing costs. An oversupply of jobs or housing may lead to traffic congestion, inequitable distribution of the tax burden, and high housing prices.

As buildout approaches, the ratio of jobs and housing is increasingly difficult to change. Because it will take a longer time to build out the employment zoning capacity than housing capacity, maintaining a balance over time will be a significant challenge. Changes in the composition of the workforce and workplace locations will influence the balance as well. In order to achieve a desirable balance, a key County-wide objective for this Refinement is that all employees in Montgomery County should have the opportunity to live in the County.

When the number of jobs for each housing unit equals the number of workers living in the typical household, this balance is theoretically achieved. In 1990, Montgomery County's jobs and resident workers were almost perfectly balanced. The ratio of jobs to existing housing was 1.54 jobs for every housing unit as compared to a ratio of workers per household of 1.55.

In view of the dynamic and complex nature of the relationship between jobs and housing, the balance which this Refinement seeks is not quantified. Instead, this Refinement prefers to set a policy goal to achieve an appropriate balance of jobs and housing on a County-wide basis and fine tune the details through master, sector, and functional plans as well as other County plans and programs.

The County monitors the relationship among land uses on an on-going basis. Each major master and sector plan review examines the contributions of the area to balancing employment and housing on a County-wide basis and meeting the County's goal of offering an adequate supply of housing for employees in the County. Based on this analysis, the plan's land use and zoning may be adjusted as appropriate, in the context of the unique features and needs of the individual planning area. For

example, plans adopted since January 1993, Silver Spring CBD and North Bethesda, have reduced potential employment areas and increased potential housing areas in response to current conditions. The Annual Growth Policy also monitors and directs growth as it allocates public facilities' capacity for new jobs and housing on a yearly basis. In addition, amendments to the Zoning Ordinance have provided an opportunity for a mix of housing and jobs on the same site. Other Zoning Ordinance amendments have reduced the development densities permitted in industrial zones.

While the County's jobs and housing are reasonably balanced now, the concern is for the future. If Montgomery County were to build all of the employment capacity (jobs) permitted under current zoning, the County's ability to provide facilities, especially roads and housing, would be overloaded, and the opportunities for Montgomery County workers to live in the County would be far more limited. Fortunately, this may never occur. Reaching the County's zoning ceiling would require the redevelopment of all existing properties to their maximum, plus maximum development of all vacant land despite site constraints. Estimating the potential buildout of housing units has similar problems.

Numerous social changes and policy decisions affect the jobs-to-housing ratio. This means that the jobs to housing ratio is constantly changing. Consequently, it is the responsibility of the master and sector plans and other plans and policies to respond to such social and development trends in a timely manner and to monitor the ratio of employment and housing on a master plan level as well as on a County-wide basis.

## **Context of the General Plan**

The General Plan is implemented through many governmental regulations, guidelines, zoning text amendments, budget decisions, and other legislative endeavors. Montgomery County now has many development guidelines which help the County realize the type of development it desires. For example, the County now prohibits development in the 100-year floodplain and requires stormwater management controls. The County also uses "Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines" at the time of subdivision to better match the timing of development with future traffic improvements. During the 1970s and 1980s, many new zones were added to the Zoning Ordinance limiting development in rural areas, allowing mixed use high density development in transit station locations, and increasing the number of residential zones to expand housing choices.

The General Plan provides the comprehensive policy framework for land use, growth management, and resource management in Montgomery County. The General Plan presides over a hierarchy of increasingly specific plans and policies leading to decisions on the use and intensity of use on individual parcels of land, the staging of development, and the capital expenditures to support and respond to growth in the County. As one descends through this hierarchy, each level is more and more specific, usually in the context of a smaller geographic area and a shorter time frame.

Adopted master plans, sector plans, and functional plans are a principal means of implementing the General Plan. By definition, these plans have a smaller scope than the General Plan, but they add the detail necessary to resolve particular land use issues within their domain. Although these plans are adopted as amendments to the

General Plan, they are expected to conform to the General Plan. Deviations will be infrequent and minor in nature. When a master plan or sector plan diverges from the General Plan, the change and its rationale will be highlighted by the Planning Board and approved by the County Council.

All of the goals and objectives within the General Plan Refinement are important to the vision for Montgomery County. Every effort will be taken to simultaneously address every goal. There may be occasions, however, where this cannot occur and compromises between conflicting goals and objectives must be achieved. The resolution of such conflicts is left to master plans, sector plans, and functional plans so that the issues can be addressed in the appropriate detail unique to each community. It is only in the master plan context, where decisions about individual parcels of land are made, that any reasonable compromises can be made.

In order to ensure that each master plan and sector plan becomes a tool for advancing the vision of the General Plan, each plan must briefly demonstrate: 1) its conformance with the overall land use patterns and concepts presented in the General Plan Refinement, highlighting any changes, 2) a rationale for its chosen priorities when conflicting goals are evident, and 3) its conformance to the seven visions of the Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992.

### **"... On Wedges and Corridors"**

Both the 1964 General Plan and the 1969 General Plan Update (approved in 1970) have guided the land use pattern and the transportation system in Montgomery County for more than two decades. The 1964 Plan, *"...On Wedges and Corridors"*, was developed as a bi-County General Plan for Montgomery County and Prince George's County. Its name comes from the regional land use pattern it recommends. The Wedges and Corridors concept has shaped the County by channeling growth into the development corridors and an Urban Ring around Washington, D.C. At the same time, Wedges of open space, farmland, and lower density residential uses have been preserved.

Conceived in 1961, the Wedges and Corridors concept was first proposed for the entire National Capital Region by the *Policies Plan for the Year 2000* (Figure 1). Montgomery County and Prince George's County are the only jurisdictions in the area that officially adopted the Wedges and Corridors concept to guide their development. The concept was originally based on six Corridors of urban development. The Corridors radiated out from Washington, D.C. like spokes of a wheel and were to be separated by the Wedges. The I-270 Corridor is located in Montgomery County. The I-95 Corridor is located immediately to the east of Montgomery County.

The I-270 Corridor consists of a series of Corridor Cities, including Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Germantown, that are linked with one another and with Washington, D. C. Another proposed Corridor City, Clarksburg, was scaled down in size by the 1968 Clarksburg Master Plan. This change is reflected in the 1969 General Plan Update. In addition, the 1964 General Plan proposed Corridor Cities for the I-95 Corridor, including Laurel and a new city east of Fairland. The 1981 Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan removed the plan for a Corridor City in Fairland.



The Corridor cities were to have intensively developed downtowns located about four miles apart with high-rise buildings containing housing, offices, and a host of shopping and cultural amenities. A ring of residential communities consisting of a variety of housing types and local shopping, recreational, and educational facilities were to surround the downtown. Each of the Corridor Cities was planned to support a population of up to 100,000 people.

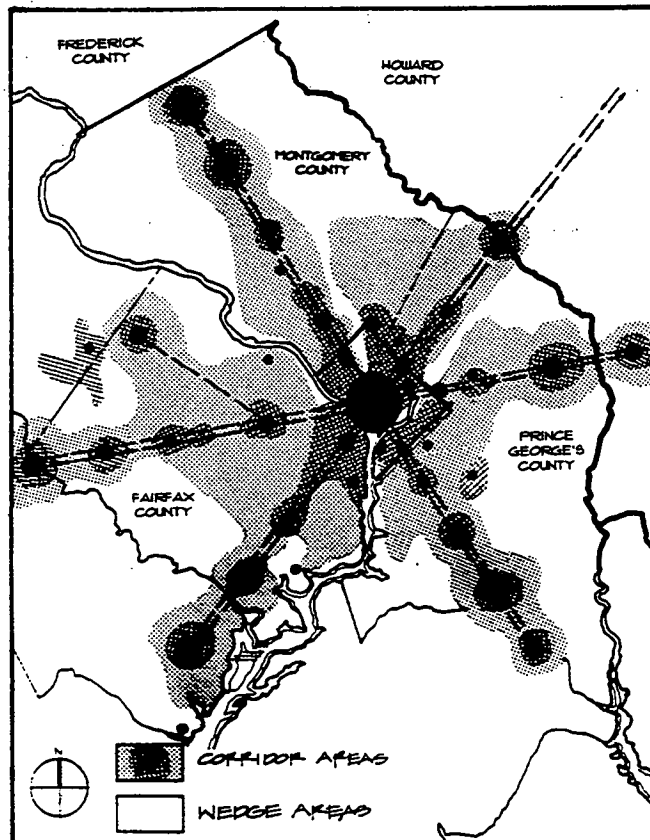
In 1970, the County Council reaffirmed the Wedges and Corridors concept and updated the General Plan by approving the 1969 updated General Plan. This Plan, which also supplements the 1964 goals and objectives, is commonly referred to as the 1969 General Plan Update. To accommodate a predicted doubling of the County's population within two decades, the 1969 Update proposed three key recommendations:

- increase the stock of affordable and clustered housing;
- protect farmland and rural open space, and expand parkland in the Wedge; and
- balance development with the provision of public infrastructure.

During the past two decades, Montgomery County has responded to those recommendations. The Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit Program was designed to provide home ownership and rental opportunities to families with moderate incomes.

Figure 1

#### YEAR 2000 WEDGES AND CORRIDORS REGIONAL CONCEPT



It increased housing affordability by giving density bonuses and design flexibility to developers. A preferential agricultural zone, in conjunction with a transferable development rights system, was developed and implemented in concert with a comprehensive farmland preservation program to protect some 91,000 acres of farmland. The Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance and the Annual Growth Policy were conceived to coordinate the timing of development with the provision of public infrastructure. The Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance provides the legal foundation to postpone subdivision approval if existing and planned public facilities would be overburdened by the proposed development. It also provides an indication of need for further public investment in infrastructure.

"Wedges and Corridors" is a shorthand means of describing an enduring vision that will continue to serve Montgomery County well into the next century. Despite the job growth in the surrounding suburbs, the District of Columbia remains the heart of the region's economy. The Wedges and Corridors concept recognizes that the District of Columbia is the geographic, economic, and cultural center of the region and that the region depends on a healthy core. The "Urban Ring" around that center and the radial "Corridors" leading from it are as important today as they were in 1964. The Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor offer the best pattern for transit serviceability and provide the area in which major compact centers can flourish.

The critical need for commuting between the development corridors within the region does not justify deviations from the Wedges and Corridors pattern. This Refinement acknowledges the need for improvements in east-west travel but not with an intent to create an east-west development corridor(s). If better east-west transportation links are to proceed, they will traverse areas not planned and not intended for intensive development.

The Wedge is as important today as it was thirty years ago. It permits the renewal of our air and water resources and the protection of natural habitats. It is very much the green lung of Montgomery County. In addition, the Wedge provides the opportunity for the agricultural industry to continue. The proximity of the Wedge to the Corridor provides a sanctuary for those who need a change from the concrete and glass of more urban settings. The Wedge provides a low density and rural housing opportunity which adds to the diversity of land use in Montgomery County.

## **IMPETUS FOR THE GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT**

It has been more than two decades since the last overall look at the General Plan. In addition to the passage of time, the need to refine the General Plan's goals and objectives was precipitated by several major events:

- two citizen committees recommended that the General Plan be refined;
- two long-range planning studies recommended that the General Plan be refined; and
- Montgomery County experienced significant change.

## **Citizen Committees**

Two citizen committees, assembled to address long-range planning issues, called for a refinement of the General Plan. In its 1988 report, *Envisioning Our Future*, the 15-member Commission on the Future suggested that "what is still valid and good in the General Plan should be reaffirmed and what needs to be modified or changed should be changed." Three years later, the 15-member Growth Management Advisory Work Group recommended that Montgomery County "investigate the need to refine the General Plan or modify its goals and objectives."

## **Planning Studies**

Two planning studies, the *General Plan Assessment Study* and the *Comprehensive Growth Policy Study (CGPS)*, also paved the way for this General Plan Refinement. In 1988, the *General Plan Assessment Study* reaffirmed the Wedges and Corridors concept as the preferred development pattern for Montgomery County "since it still appears to provide a better solution to increasing critical transportation and environmental issues than a more sprawling development pattern." According to the study, "the County's development has been surprisingly faithful to the Plan's basic principles." The study also suggested further work on the imbalance between potential growth based on the zoning envelope and the ability of planned infrastructure to serve it.

The 1989 CGPS was a Planning Department technical study of current trends that affect growth and was intended to provide a background frame of reference for use, as appropriate, in future decision making. It offered a County-wide perspective which could be used by individual master and sector plans. The CGPS confirmed the validity of the General Plan's principles, but found that traffic congestion would be excessive unless commuters in Montgomery County become less dependent on the single-occupant automobile. The study considered strategies to reduce car use, such as clustering households and jobs near transit and improving mass transportation alternatives, including trolley lines and high-occupancy-vehicle lanes.

## **Significant Change**

The calls for a refinement to the General Plan by the two planning studies and two citizen committees were, in part, a response to the significant changes that have taken place in Montgomery County since the completion of the 1969 General Plan Update. The magnitude of these changes is highlighted below. Most mirror demographic trends throughout the United States. However, Montgomery County's growth in population and the number of households were more rapid than the nation's. In addition, the County's increase in foreign born population was comparatively very large.

### **Land Use**

Between 1960 and 1991, the amount of developed land more than tripled. In 1960, about 49,000 acres, or 15 percent of the County's total land area, were developed, compared with 155,000 acres, or 48 percent, in 1991. Residential uses increased from 7.7 percent to 28.9 percent of the

County's land area, while office, commercial retail, and industrial uses increased from 0.6 percent to 2.6 percent of the total land area. Land classified as vacant, forest, or agricultural declined to 51.6 percent of total land area.

## **Population**

**Montgomery County is now the most populous jurisdiction in Maryland, with 757,000 people in 1990.** In 1970, the County ranked fourth with 522,800 people. More than one-quarter of the state's population increase since 1970 occurred here.

**Montgomery County residents are older.** In 1970, the median age was 27.9 years; in 1990, it was 33.9. Today, more than 10 percent of County residents are 65 years of age or older, compared to 6 percent in 1970.

**Montgomery County residents are more diverse.** Racial minorities made up almost a quarter of the County's 1990 population; in 1970 they were only 5 percent. In addition, the County's foreign born population also grew, from 7.5 percent of the total population in 1970 to almost 18.6 percent in 1990, significantly more than the nationwide increase from almost 5 percent to 8 percent.

## **Households**

**The number of households grew almost twice as fast as the population.** From 1970 to 1990, the number of households increased 80 percent, while Montgomery County's population grew by only 45 percent.

**Montgomery County households are smaller.** The average household size dropped from 3.30 to 2.65 persons per household as the proportion of the population under age 18 declined and the proportion of single-person households increased.

## **Housing**

**Montgomery County has some 20 years of zoned capacity for housing remaining.** The number of housing units in the County grew by 83 percent between 1970 and 1990, from 161,000 to 296,000. The County has the total estimated capacity to accommodate between 440,000 and 480,000 housing units on its residentially zoned land. Between 144,000 and 184,000 units remain to be built.

**The affordability of new housing in the County has declined substantially since the mid-1970s.** The median income household probably cannot afford a typical new house today, according to the housing affordability index. Nonetheless, there appears to be a better match between median incomes of County residents and median prices of new homes in Montgomery County than there is in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area or the nation.

## **Employment**

**Montgomery County is no longer just a bedroom community; the County has become an employment center in its own right. Between 1970 and 1989, the number of jobs in Montgomery County more than doubled to 488,000 jobs. One out of every 5.5 jobs in the state is located here.**

**There has been greater growth in employment in Montgomery County than anticipated in the 1969 General Plan Update. The 1969 Update's "most probable" forecast for 1990 employment was 334,000 jobs, 32 percent less than the actual 1989 total of 488,000 jobs.**

**Montgomery County has some 45 years of zoned capacity for jobs. The number of jobs in the County grew by 150 percent between 1970 and 1990 from 182,000 to 455,000. As of January 1993, the County had a total estimated capacity to accommodate between 1 million and 1.2 million jobs. Recent revisions to master and sector plans and changes to the Zoning Ordinance have reduced this range of job capacity.**

**Women are a large component of Montgomery County's work force. Between 1970 and 1987, the female labor force participation rate rose from 44.8 percent to an estimated 65.6 percent.**

## **Transportation**

**Montgomery County residents own more motor vehicles. Between 1970 and 1990, the number of cars and motorcycles residents owned almost doubled to 489,000, while the population increased 45 percent.**

**There has been significant growth in commuting by transit since 1969. However, single-occupant vehicles remain the predominant means of commuting. Between 1968 and 1987, the share of Montgomery County resident workers who commuted by transit almost doubled to 12 percent. During the same period, the percentage of workers driving alone increased from 72 percent to 75 percent.**

## **Environment**

**Landmark federal environmental legislation has had a major impact on land use decisions. Important new laws include the 1970 Clean Air Act (amended in 1990), the 1970 National Environmental Policy Act, the 1973 Clean Water Act (amended in 1977), and the 1973 Endangered Species Act.**

**The Metropolitan Washington Area's air quality is still below the national standard for ozone. The levels of some air pollutants have declined, but for almost every year since 1970, regional levels of ozone and carbon monoxide have exceeded federal air quality standards set by the Clean Air Act.**

## **LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF THE GENERAL PLAN**

The statutes governing amendment to and adoption of the General Plan, contained in enabling State legislation called "The Regional District Act," have changed over time. In 1964, when The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission adopted *...on Wedges and Corridors, A General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District, in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*, there was no legal provision for the Montgomery County Council, acting as the District Council, to participate in the preparation, review, or adoption of the Commission's long-range plans. By 1969, State law had been amended to require County Council review and approval of such plans. The County Council approved the *1969 General Plan Update* by resolution in 1970. By virtue of the General Plan's acknowledgment in subsequent master and sector plans, the 1969 General Plan Update has served as a policy guide for land use planning since that time.

## **GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT ADOPTION PROCESS**

The General Plan Refinement was presented to the Planning Board as a Staff Draft Amendment in July 1992, following eight preliminary worksessions by the Planning Board. A Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment was approved by the Board in August for the purpose of public hearing in October. After the public hearing, the Planning Board conducted worksessions and ultimately authorized the preparation of the Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment. The Planning Board (Final) Draft was transmitted to the County Executive and County Council. The County Executive's fiscal impact analysis recommendations were transmitted to the County Council within 60 days of its receipt. After holding a public hearing and worksessions on the Refinement, the County Council made changes and approved the Amendment. Finally, the Amendment will be transmitted to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption.

Throughout the process, community participation and outreach have been encouraged. Ensuring that the Refinement reflects the needs, aspirations, and visions of Montgomery County citizenry is critical to its successful implementation.

Master plans and sector plans approved and adopted subsequent to this Amendment will continue to amend the General Plan. As the County changes, and as technology and social dynamics evolve, the General Plan will continue to require review of its vision, goals, and objectives.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT**

Throughout the development of the General Plan Refinement, a number of themes recurred; many of them were also basic to the 1964 General Plan and the 1969 General Plan Update. These themes shape the direction of the goals and objectives and constitute the philosophical underpinnings of the General Plan Refinement. As such, they are designated as Guiding Principles. The Guiding Principles are not intended as a means to rank priorities among competing goals; instead, they establish a basis for future decision making.

**Wedges and Corridors Concept.** The implementation of the Wedges and Corridors concept is fundamental to the General Plan Refinement. Montgomery County's land use pattern is expected to conform to this concept, which contains the geographic vision for the future arrangement of land uses.

**Master and Sector Plans.** These plans have guided the modifications of the General Plan since 1970. In the future, the spirit and intent of the General Plan Refinement will be embodied and embellished by these plans. In particular, future master and sector plans will discuss the manner in which the plan conforms to, or departs from, the guidance of the General Plan Refinement.

**Physically Concentrated Centers.** The General Plan Refinement supports appropriately sized centers of activity whose edges complement the scale of the area in which they are located. It encourages an efficient land use pattern of jobs, housing, and other uses within centers. The Refinement promotes mixed-use development and sensitive increases in intensity within appropriate boundaries in centers to control sprawl, to reduce energy consumption and pollution, to contain infrastructure needs, and to reduce development pressure on rural open space areas and farmland.

**Community Identity.** The General Plan Refinement recognizes the human need for social interaction and for communities that create a sense of pride, a sense of place, and a hometown atmosphere. It encourages public and private development whose architecture and design address these needs by incorporating individuality, civic features, and the opportunity for social interaction.

**Transit Serviceability.** The General Plan Refinement encourages land use patterns that can be served effectively by the County's integrated multi-modal transportation system. It emphasizes increased opportunities for alternatives to single-occupant auto travel and attention to the needs of pedestrians. A key aspect of making the County more accessible by transit and walking is that it can reduce travel by car. Favoring transit can make more efficient use of the existing roadway network and can reduce air pollution.

**Compatibility.** The General Plan Refinement encourages new development that will harmonize with the existing built environment and the natural environment. In some cases, this is a matter of scale and intensity. In other cases, compatibility is a question of location, function, or style. This principle is especially important as redevelopment of land becomes an increasing feature of growth.

**Variety and Choice in Housing, Jobs, and Transportation.** The General Plan Refinement supports the concepts of variety and choice to promote a strong and diverse economy, to meet the housing and employment needs of current and future Montgomery County citizens, and to encourage effective and efficient transportation options.

**Resource Management.** The General Plan Refinement seeks to attain the most efficient and socially beneficial management of all Montgomery County resources, ranging from the natural environment to public and private finances, to the land itself.

**Environmental Protection.** The General Plan Refinement recognizes the importance of stewardship of the natural environment. Montgomery County's land, water, and air are finite assets which must not be wasted. The General Plan Refinement calls on development to mitigate potential negative impacts in order to balance the human need for places to live, work, and play with the need to protect the environment.

**Public Investment.** The General Plan Refinement recognizes the importance of public investment to implement the Wedge and Corridor concepts of the Refinement, including the goals, objectives, and strategies.

## **CONSISTENCY WITH THE MARYLAND PLANNING ACT OF 1992**

The General Plan Refinement stands in compliance with the general plan requirement of the Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 (the Planning Act). The seven visions of the State Planning Act of 1992 are embraced and confirmed by the General Plan Refinement.

The seven visions of the State Planning Act as stated in Article 66B, Section 3.06 of the Annotated Code of Maryland are:

1. Development is to be concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive areas are to be protected;
3. In rural areas growth is to be directed to existing population centers and resource areas are to be protected;
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is to be considered a universal ethic;
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption is to be practiced;
6. To assure the achievement of paragraphs 1 through 5 above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are to be streamlined;
7. Funding mechanisms are to be addressed to achieve these objectives.

The Refinement's conformance to these visions is described in several places. First, the Geographic Components section describes how the general pattern of development addresses the seven visions. Second, the introduction to each goal in Chapter 2 generally states how the goal, objectives, and strategies set the framework for achieving the seven visions.

In addition to the General Plan Refinement's conformance to the seven visions, the Planning Act requires the implementation of a sensitive areas element designed to protect environmentally impacted areas. Sensitive areas are described in the Act as 100-year floodplains, streams and their buffer areas, habitats of threatened



and endangered species, and steep slopes. Flexible development regulations, the streamlining of the development process, and innovative economic development techniques are also required to be addressed on a more specific basis. The sensitive areas element and a framework for amending zoning and other regulations and ordinances will be addressed as part of the master plan and functional planning program.

The Maryland Planning Act also requires a review and, if necessary, revision or amendment to local plans which implement the Planning Act, at intervals of no more than six years. The purpose of this review is to ensure compliance with the Planning Act. A status report, six years after the General Plan Refinement and six years after the adoption of future master, sector, or functional plans or plan amendments will be produced to satisfy this statutory requirement. The six-year report offers an excellent opportunity to assess the status of the County's implementation of the General Plan Refinement. It is also an opportunity to review the conformance of the County's other plans to the Refinement.

## **GEOGRAPHIC COMPONENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT**

The General Plan Refinement divides Montgomery County into four geographic components: the Urban Ring, the Corridors, the Suburban Communities, and the Wedge. With the exception of the Wedge, the borders between these areas are gentle transitions, not stark interruptions of an otherwise continuous pattern. Each area is defined in terms of appropriate land uses, scale, intensity, and function. The geographic components are illustrated in Figure 2.

The geographic components envisioned in this Refinement effort have their genesis in the 1964 General Plan. The Plan recognized and encouraged growth in the Urban Ring surrounding Washington, D.C., while identifying the desirability of concentrated Corridor City development along the I-270 Corridor. The Wedge was envisioned as a "green lung" characterized by two different, yet complementary land use areas. One area was suggested for low-density residential development to provide additional housing and recreational opportunities while helping to shape the Corridor. The second area within the Wedge was envisioned as a more rural environment conducive to farming activities, rural open space, and conservation of natural resources.

The geographic components provide a vision for the future while acknowledging the modifications to the Wedges and Corridors concept that have evolved during the past two decades. In particular, they confirm two distinct sub-areas of the Wedge - an Agricultural Wedge and a Residential Wedge. They also recognize the transitional areas of generally moderate density and suburban character that have evolved between the Wedge, Corridor, and Urban Ring as Suburban Communities. Emphasis remains on intensification of the Corridor, particularly along the main stem.

However, the Refinement expands the 1964 General Plan concept of centers from an emphasis on Corridor Cities to include the role of centers in all four geographic areas. Centers are hubs of community activity, typically including retail

uses. Other uses are located in centers to the degree appropriate to the center's scale and location. Centers are generally more intensive than surrounding land uses but compatible with those uses. They range in size and type from central business districts and Corridor Cities to neighborhood retail centers in the Suburban Communities to rural village centers in the Wedge.

Many of the goals and objectives in this Refinement will direct new growth to compact centers within the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor. Generally the central business districts in the Urban Ring will be developed at higher average densities than the centers in the I-270 Corridor, including the original Corridor Cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Germantown. Centers in both these components may well have considerable regional name recognition and power to attract business from a wide area. The centers in the Suburban Communities and the Wedge are envisioned as primarily serving the local community.

The 1964 General Plan was quite specific in its description of Corridor Cities. They were to be spaced four miles apart, with tall buildings identifiable from several miles away. The tall buildings were to be interspersed with plazas and walkways, "...highly accessible, uncluttered and inspiring." The street and highway pattern within each city was to repeat the radial and circumferential system of the region with a clearly defined core, including a rapid transit station under a pedestrian plaza. This Refinement leaves such details to the area master plans and sector plans.

Relatively dense, compact centers are essential for Montgomery County's future. The major centers especially will conserve energy, reduce vehicle trips, and minimize the amount of land that experiences the impacts of development. They will also provide the County with additional urban places that, like the existing central business districts, promote public life and bring together all the ethnic and social groups which make the County a community. This vision cannot be realized without the infrastructure needed to support the density.

Major centers provide the best opportunity for growth with the least impact on land, water, air, and fiscal resources. For example, the County's high-rise housing is often built at a density of 40 housing units on each acre of land. The same number of units, built as single-family detached houses on two-acre lots, will consume 80 acres of land and would be costly and difficult to serve by public facilities and transit.

The County's major centers should "grow up" rather than "grow out." Well-defined boundaries of centers, established in small area plans, will give surrounding neighborhoods assurance that the center next door will not overwhelm their community. "Compact" means that the centers themselves can be pedestrian friendly and transit serviceable. The ability to walk to many activities such as work, day care, and shopping will limit the need for longer distance travel for residents and workers in centers.

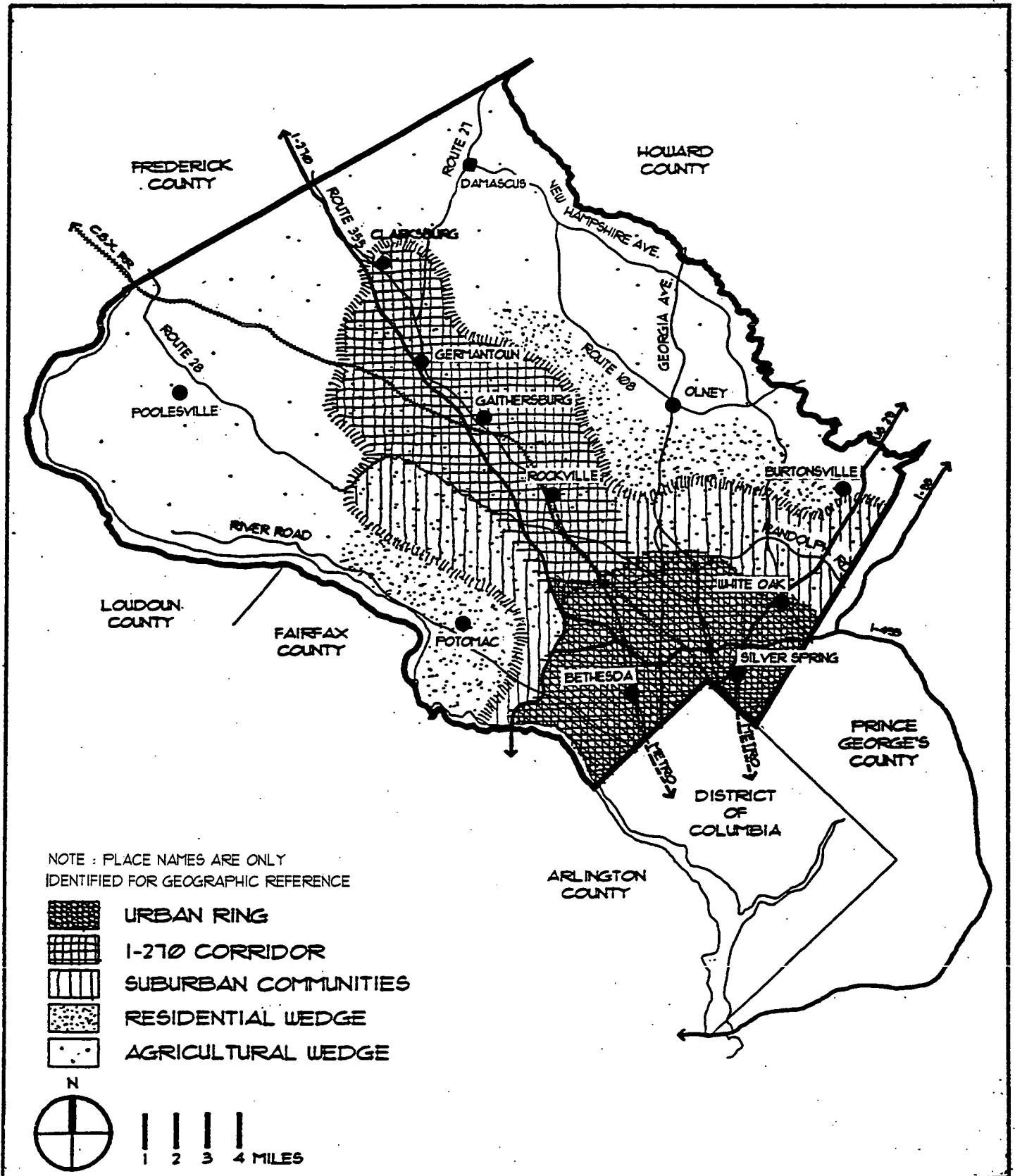
The attractiveness of the County's major centers should be so compelling that these centers become the first choice for new County residents and businesses. The County needs bustling central business districts where people can work and enjoy life. Centers should be places where residents can watch a play or visit an artist's studio, eat at an ethnic restaurant or sit at an outdoor cafe, meet friends while shopping on the main street or farmers, market, listen to a band concert in the summer or ice skate in the winter in the center of town, relax with a good book on their balcony or in the

public library. Centers should be places where residents can walk to work on sidewalks under leafy trees or catch the Metro to the nation's capital. They should be places where office workers can walk to the stationery store, walk to the accountant, and walk to lunch to meet with a customer. Centers should also be places where the pressures of business will be eased by a stroll to the nearby ice cream parlors and an evening in the neighborhood movie theater. Urban amenities can more than outweigh the possible inconveniences of density.

Figure 2



# WEDGES AND CORRIDORS GEOGRAPHIC COMPONENTS



The County's success in enhancing its existing central business districts and Metro station areas with additional planned development, should be a cause for celebration as an environmentally sound means of accommodating new development. The added activity in the buildings and parks which replace the surface parking lots between existing buildings can transform centers into a more inviting place to walk between destinations.

Even in suburban locations, the isolated supermarket or the enclosed regional shopping mall surrounded by a sea of parking should be the exception rather than the rule. Walking and biking as well as transit use within and between centers should become an inviting alternative to driving and parking. This will only happen when activities are closer together and the activities are connected by pleasant sidewalks and pathways.

The County cannot afford to allow any deterioration in its centers. Each center is important to the County's overall economic well being. Run down or vandalized, vacant buildings are cancers in an urban fabric which, if left unchecked, will quickly spread to the more healthy areas. The County must be aggressive and pro-active in preserving and enhancing the competitive advantages of these precious areas.

The single-family detached house, with its large private yard and driveway, is an important part of the American Dream; however, that dream has a price in terms of the land that it requires and the range of infrastructure needed to support it, including roads, schools, parks, and other facilities. There are costs to the environment and costs to the public purse associated with single-family detached housing. Even if single-family housing were environmentally and fiscally desirable, there is a limit to the number of new single-family detached houses that can be built in the County. The supply of land ten or fifteen miles from the nation's capital is a fixed commodity. To continue to grow, and accommodate the jobs and residents attracted to Montgomery County, the County's major centers should be so safe, appealing, and convenient that they become an alternative American Dream.

The designation of geographic components responds particularly to the seven visions of the Maryland Planning Act. As a total package, the geographic components of the General Plan Refinement uphold the stewardship of land as a universal ethic (Vision 4). The Urban Ring and Corridor concentrate development into suitable areas (Vision 1) by supporting the planned development of dense, mixed-use centers in locations convenient to transit. This land use pattern also conserves scarce resources (Vision 5) by reducing transportation demands and reducing the total land area needed to accommodate new growth. Economic growth is encouraged (Vision 6) by permitting the densest development in the County in the Urban Ring and Corridor. The Suburban Communities will have more moderate densities but still guide development into appropriate centers. Their lower densities will permit greater protection of the natural environment (Vision 2). Sensitive areas are protected (Vision 2) through the designation of a low density residential transition area and an agricultural preservation wedge area which prohibits incompatible uses and preserves farmland, forested open space, and other sensitive areas. The proposed clustering of future development in rural enclaves is responsive to concentrating development in suitable areas (Vision 1) and directing growth in rural areas to existing population centers (Vision 3).

Each of the four geographic areas has a unique past, present, and future, which are described in the following sections.

## **The Urban Ring**

A vision for the Urban Ring is generally characterized by. .

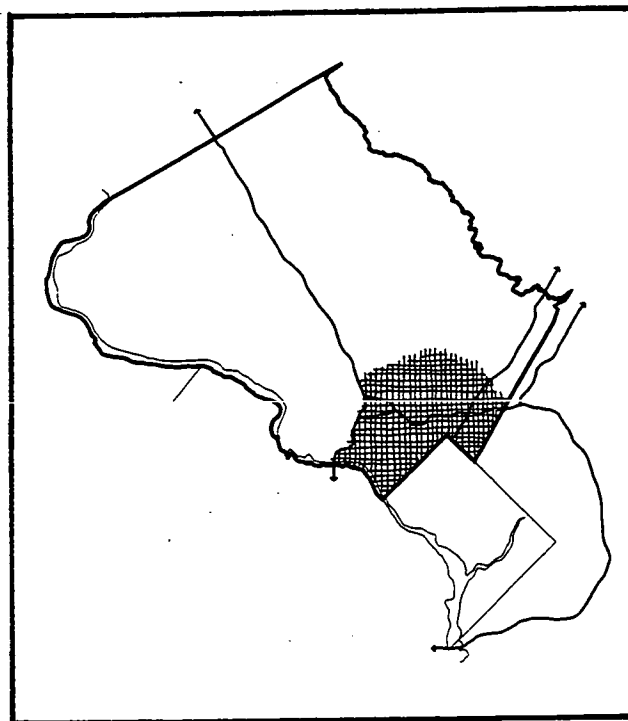
- well-established, lively centers with job and housing opportunities;
- strong residential neighborhoods;
- varied transportation options;
- relatively dense development;
- active public and private reinvestment; and
- commercial revitalization.

### **Location**

The Urban Ring is the relatively intensively developed area of Montgomery County nearest Washington, D.C. The Urban Ring follows the boundaries described in the 1969 General Plan Update. It includes the legislative defined planning areas of Bethesda-Chevy Chase, North Bethesda/Garrett Park, Kensington/Wheaton, Kemp Mill-Four Corners, Silver Spring, Takoma Park, and part of White Oak. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3

### **THE URBAN RING**



## **The Urban Ring Yesterday**

The 1964 General Plan established the concept of the Urban Ring. The 1969 Update decried the "...lack of a firm policy to guide development" in the Urban Ring. To provide a "determinate form," the plan called for the transformation of the existing regional, primarily retail, activity centers into compact, multi-purpose centers, much like the centers of the Corridor City concept. To aid the conversion from a suburban to an urban form, scattered vacant parcels of land were recommended for urban development. Transit service was considered important to meet growing transportation demands.

## **The Urban Ring Today**

The Urban Ring is an older, well-established, densely developed area characterized by diversity in income, ethnicity, and racial composition. Within the Urban Ring there is great variety in density and character among areas. Communities in the Urban Ring are generally well maintained and many feature landmarks that identify them as distinct neighborhoods. A strong sense of community pride exists among residents in these neighborhoods of tree-lined, well-connected streets. The Urban Ring is an area in which suburban lifestyles exist, if not side by side, then very close to an urban environment. The Urban Ring is expected to remain as the County's most densely developed area.

The stream valley parks are an important natural feature of some areas within the Urban Ring. These linear ribbons of green serve to buffer major streams from development and provide a defining feature for neighborhoods. They also offer the opportunity for many leisure-time pursuits.

Some areas of the Urban Ring provide a substantial number of jobs and an unusual variety of retail opportunities. Centers in the Urban Ring are generally intensively developed, with structured parking available at regional malls and in the Central Business Districts. These centers range from regional shopping malls, such as White Flint and Wheaton Plaza, to neighborhood stores, such as those found at Chevy Chase Lake. They include compact neighborhood shopping centers, "town" centers, such as Kensington, and linear business districts, such as those along Rockville Pike in North Bethesda. Much of the County's high-rise housing is located in centers throughout the Urban Ring.

The maturing of the Central Business Districts of Silver Spring, Bethesda, and Friendship Heights as high-density employment and residential centers is especially notable. With their dense development focused around transit stations, they more closely resemble the Corridor Cities envisioned in the 1964 General Plan than the Corridor Cities themselves. The Wheaton Central Business District is envisioned to retain a lower-density profile. Other transit station areas, further away from the County's border with the District of Columbia, are less intensively developed and more single purpose in use.

## **The Urban Ring Tomorrow**

The future of the Urban Ring contains both new and continuing challenges. Some of the most important of these include:

- accommodating selective additional development and redevelopment in a sensitive manner;
- emphasizing development, including housing, in appropriate transit station areas;
- expanding transportation options, while accommodating pedestrian needs;
- preserving existing neighborhoods;
- maintaining and enhancing public facilities;
- enhancing park and recreation linkages; and
- protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

The General Plan Refinement foresees continued growth and intensification where appropriate in centers in the Urban Ring. The Refinement does not recommend uniform high density throughout the Urban Ring. Suburban densities will be found within many areas of the Urban Ring outside centers. Since growth will include both infill and redevelopment, the Refinement stresses the special need for compatibility with existing communities. The Refinement also expects Montgomery County to avoid the creation or perpetuation of abandoned or blighted areas through appropriate zoning, designation of transition areas, and public investment. It designates the Urban Ring as a high priority location for new infrastructure to accommodate new growth and redevelopment and to support existing development.

The Refinement emphasizes the continued desirability of development and redevelopment in the Metrorail station areas and generally encourages mixed use in these areas. Recognizing that market conditions favor office and commercial development around centers, the County will nonetheless promote housing, especially affordable housing, whenever possible. Small scale and specialty retail development, an integral part of many centers, will continue to be supported, as will facilities for cultural activities. Special financial incentives may be required to achieve the small scale retail in appropriate residential areas desired by many citizens.

Transportation issues are particularly important in the densely developed Urban Ring. Pedestrian-scale development is encouraged, with emphasis on urban design features and traffic management to create an inviting, safe, and pleasing atmosphere. The Urban Ring is also expected to offer a rich selection of transportation modes.

While encouraging continued growth in the Urban Ring, the General Plan Refinement seeks to preserve the flourishing neighborhoods already located there. The Refinement encourages the County to protect these areas from the encroachment



of non-conforming land uses, excessive noise, and through traffic. It seeks to maintain and reinforce the many desirable community features that are common in the Urban Ring.

The General Plan Refinement encourages protection of environmentally sensitive areas throughout the County. In the Urban Ring, environmental protection frequently means rehabilitation or retrofitting. As knowledge about the importance of enhancing and maintaining air quality, water quality, and other natural resources increases and as new technologies become available for this purpose, public and private efforts to better care for the resources in the Urban Ring are essential. Cleaning up streams, managing stormwater runoff, modernizing parking lots, and planting street trees are a few of the activities that can offer great rewards.

## **The Corridor**

A vision for the Corridor is generally characterized by. . .

- mixed intensity, mixed-use, transit-serviceable land uses;
- greatest intensity in centers along the main stem, decreasing densities toward the outer edges;
- flexible design standards in residential areas;
- relatively intense development;
- varied transportation options;
- active public and private investment; and
- commercial revitalization.

### **Location**

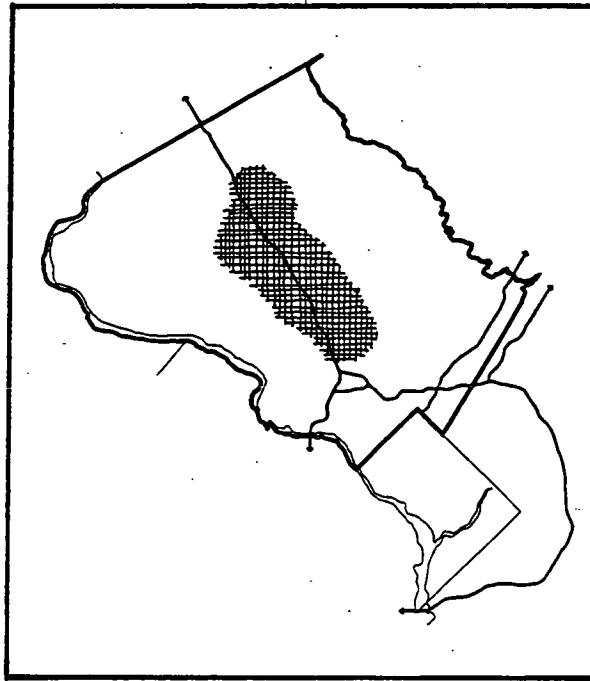
Montgomery County contains the entire I-270 Corridor (hereinafter referred to as the "Corridor"). The I-270 Corridor consists of the incorporated cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg and the areas surrounding the existing and planned centers of Shady Grove, Germantown, and Clarksburg. It extends northwest through the County generally from the Montrose Road area to the northern edge of the Clarksburg Planning Area. Immediately to the east of Montgomery County is the I-95 Corridor. Although I-95 and its surrounding land uses affect Eastern Montgomery County, the area east of US 29 is in the Suburban Ring.

### **The Corridor Yesterday**

The Corridor was a primary feature of the 1964 General Plan and the 1969 General Plan Update. It was viewed as the means to avoid sprawl and, instead, achieve an efficient, orderly, and attractive pattern of development. It was expected to offer convenience, especially in transportation, and to allow the efficient delivery of public services. The Corridor Cities were perceived as an opportunity for up-to-date

community planning, a chance to "start fresh." The 1964 General Plan also anticipated circumferential connections between the I-270 Corridor in Montgomery County and the I-95 Corridor in Prince George's County.

**Figure 4**  
**THE CORRIDOR**



The 1969 General Plan Update acknowledged both the development opportunities of the I-270 and I-95 Corridors and the fiscal problems of providing the necessary infrastructure.

The 1964 General Plan gave guidance to subsequent master plans to tailor each Corridor City to avoid the appearance that they were "stamped out of the same mold." One area where this guidance has been most debated is the transitions between the Corridor Cities. The 1964 General Plan envisioned that the edges of the Cities would contain parks and campus-style industrial areas. The Plan also acknowledged that "the corridor pattern retains the advantages of concentrated and well-organized urbanization without trying to retain large open spaces along the corridor axis between centers of population." The 1964 Plan did not consistently show a "greenbelt" between each Corridor City. The transitions that developed between the Corridor Cities along I-270 display some of the characteristics envisioned by the 1964 General Plan.

### **The Corridor Today**

The I-270 Corridor is the County's major radial transportation spine along which much of Montgomery County's housing and employment growth has occurred during the past two decades. This Corridor is a significant employment resource for the County and region, representing both the County's and state's economic future. Knowledge- and information-based businesses have increasingly outpaced the manufacturing anticipated in the 1964 General Plan. The I-270 Corridor is served by a complement of transportation options, including commuter rail, Metrorail, expanded I-270 capacity, and numerous major highways.

The I-270 Corridor has not yet fully evolved. In developmental terms, it is an adolescent. Its present achievements in fulfilling the 1964 General Plan and 1969 General Plan Update visions have been modest. The Corridor is plagued by congestion and poor pedestrian amenities. It is characterized by surface parking lots, strip-retail, and sprawling development, instead of densely developed identifiable centers. In addition, a full range of community services is available only in the more developed portions of the Corridor.

Most of the corridor cities did not develop as envisioned. Rather, high-density development has occurred along a line (MD 355 and I-270) in the center of the Corridor. The majority of the commercial/industrial development and high-density residential development occurred along this line. Development radiating out from the center line lessens in density as the distance increases. Demand to develop the I-270 Corridor came well in advance of the transit stations envisioned in the 1964 General Plan. Consequently, early development was characterized by the low-density office parks loosely strung along I-270, with housing located away from the main arteries of travel. Higher density development has begun to appear around the Corridor's Metrorail stations and other key locations. East-west transportation movement remains a problem.

Much of the residential development in the Corridor is relatively new and built to popular suburban standards. Curved, cul-de-sac streets in strictly residential areas lend an air of privacy while reducing the intrusion of through traffic. On the other hand, they tend to reduce mobility and inhibit community interaction beyond the immediate neighborhood.

The I-95 Corridor in Prince George's County steps down to a suburban character in Montgomery County. The Montgomery County portion of this area was envisioned as predominantly residential in the 1969 General Plan Update. The office and industrial uses that developed have done so in accordance with subsequently adopted master plans. The area east of US 29 is characterized by single-family detached housing, relatively dense townhouse communities, apartment complexes, and suburban office parks, with scattered public services.

The proposed Konterra development in Prince George's County, which will straddle I-95 in one of the original Corridor City sites, will have major impacts on development and traffic patterns in both Counties. If development continues to the north in Howard County and to the east in Prince George's County, the substantial transportation challenges in the area are likely to grow in Montgomery County. The 1964 and 1969 Plans recognized the need for a transportation link between the I-270 and the I-95 Corridors. This need is still recognized by this General Plan Refinement.

### **The Corridor Tomorrow**

The Corridor concept remains sound. At the same time, its future holds a number of challenges. These include:

- developing compact, mixed-use, transit-serviceable centers;
- achieving better access for public and private services in residential areas;

- encouraging a sense of community identity;
- providing connections between Corridors;
- enhancing park and recreation linkages; and
- protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

The General Plan Refinement encourages the concentration of development in key centers, such as transit station areas in the I-270 Corridor. It calls for compact, mixed-use, transit-serviceable development in these centers. Such centers bring housing, employment, and retail opportunities closer together, offering a convenient, lively place to live and work. A sense of community identity can be achieved more easily in strong, identifiable centers. In addition, opportunities to facilitate access to transit, including high-occupancy-vehicle lanes, become more feasible.

Residential neighborhoods present special challenges along the I-270 Corridor. The General Plan Refinement calls for more flexibility in the design of subdivisions. Innovative design can permit the safety and privacy desired by residents. It can also bring small neighborhood-oriented services and transit closer to individual subdivisions and forge connections to neighboring areas to foster a sense of community identity.

Market forces will continue to push the spread of the I-270 Corridor and the I-95 Corridor toward the Wedge and the Suburban Communities. The General Plan Refinement places great importance on containing Corridor and center development within existing and planned limits; continued dispersion will put further strains on the environment, transportation system, and the Wedges and Corridors concept itself.

## **The Suburban Communities**

A vision for the Suburban Communities is generally characterized by. . .

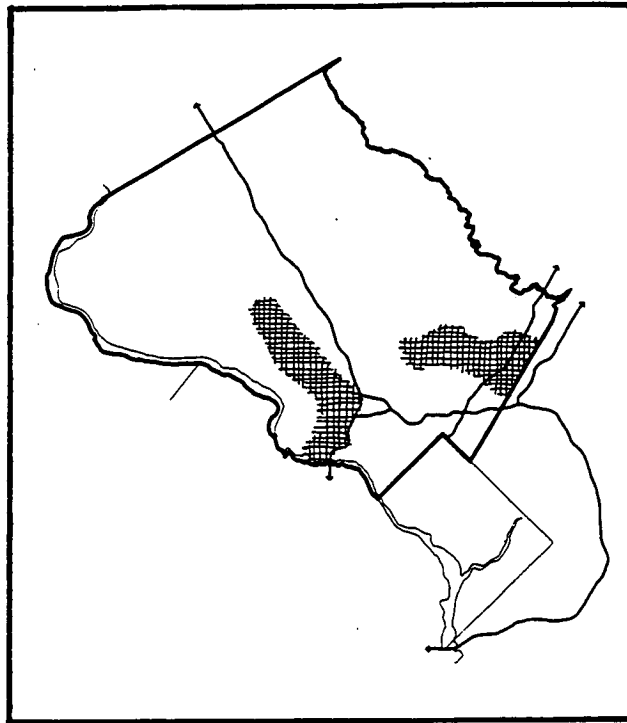
- moderate density land uses which are transit serviceable along major arteries;
- increasing transportation options;
- suburban residential neighborhoods;
- distinct centers; and
- appropriate public and private investment.

### **Location**

The Suburban Communities are located in two areas of the County. The western portion lies between the Corridor and the Residential Wedge. The eastern portion is between the Urban Ring, Corridors, Agricultural Wedge, and Residential Wedge. The Suburban Communities comprise all of the Aspen Hill Planning Area

and parts of the Potomac, Travilah, Darnestown, Cloverly, White Oak, and Fairland Planning Areas. (See Figure 5.)

**Figure 5**  
**THE SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES**



## **The Suburban Communities Yesterday**

The 1964 General Plan and the 1969 General Plan Update made no real distinction between suburban and urban land use patterns. Instead, the Suburban Communities were part of the broad brush transition between the Urban Ring, Corridors, and the Wedge. As a result, there was no separate vision or individually planned character for them. At that time, parts of the Suburban Communities were developing as residential portions of the "urbanized area;" other sections were as yet undeveloped and were zoned for half-acre lots, as was most of Montgomery County.

## **The Suburban Communities Today**

Suburban Communities are largely a collection of single-family subdivisions built on quarter- and half-acre lots. Townhouse and garden apartment developments are scattered throughout. Much of the area in the Suburban Communities has been developed during the past 20 years. As a result of the 1974 Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) Program, the Suburban Communities are important locations of affordable housing. The MPDU program permits townhouses in zones essentially designated for single-family detached units. The presence of MPDUs has meant that subdivisions in the Suburban Communities are somewhat more varied in terms of housing types and residents' incomes than areas that developed before 1974.

The Suburban Communities contain few employment opportunities today and few are envisioned in the future. However, many services are generally available within a reasonable driving distance. Centers in these areas are typically neighborhood-serving, such as shopping centers anchored by grocery stores. The automobile is the primary means of transportation.

## **The Suburban Communities Tomorrow**

By defining Suburban Communities as a separate geographic component, the General Plan Refinement offers an enhanced opportunity to identify and address the special needs of these areas. Some of the challenges for the future include:

- providing a sense of community;
- maintaining the quality of life while providing east-west traffic connections;
- enhancing park and recreation linkages;
- increasing transportation options and efficiency;
- retaining a suburban residential character;
- providing compact, geographically contained centers;
- increasing housing opportunities at appropriate neighborhood centers; and
- protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

Many neighborhoods in the Suburban Communities require additional focus and identity. To some degree, sense of community tends to grow over time as individual touches are added to standard housing and neighborhood designs. Even then, identity is a challenge for suburban subdivisions. The General Plan Refinement offers strategies to begin to address the problem of community identity. In the absence of traditional town centers, facilities such as small parks and sidewalks can help by providing opportunities for children to play and neighbors to meet. Community events that call for participation and coordination can sow the seeds for a sense of identity, even if a focal point is lacking. Locally significant names for communities and public facilities can also help create individuality, as can careful siting of any new centers.

Another common feature of the Suburban Communities is their separation from other neighborhoods, from transit, and from needed services. This is particularly true of those subdivisions with curvilinear streets, culs-de-sac, and few physical connections to the larger community. A more highly interconnected system of roads will be part of any effort to create linkages with the rest of the County. Provision of additional means of transportation, within the bounds of fiscal prudence, will also be important. Increased facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially sidewalks and bike paths, are particularly desirable.

The General Plan Refinement encourages linking stream valley parks and other "green areas." Connecting these green ribbons passing through the Suburban Communities will add valuable markers of community identity, protection for the environment, and recreation opportunities. Trails for hiking and biking will be especially welcome for pleasure and as another transportation choice.

## The Wedge

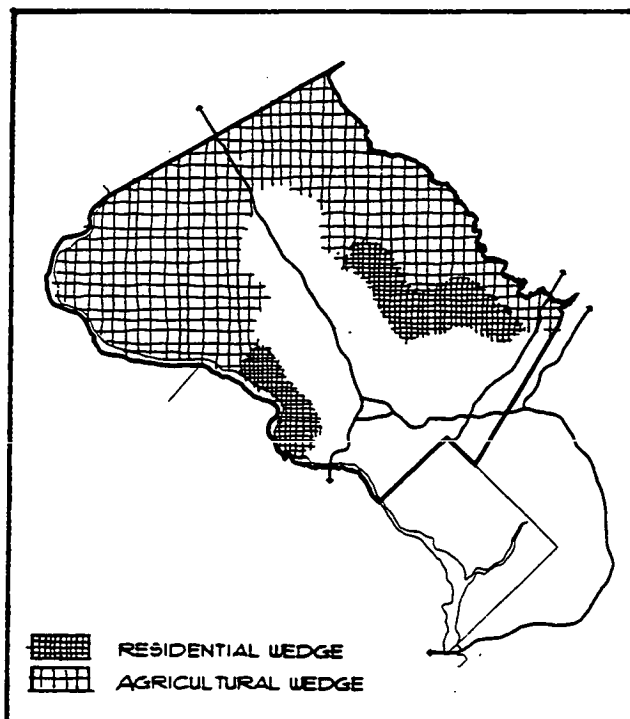
A vision for the Agricultural and Residential Wedge is generally characterized by . . .

- agricultural use;
- low density residential development;
- large areas for open space;
- small rural centers; and
- targeted public and private investment.

### Location

The Wedge is divided into two distinct parts. The Agricultural Wedge consists of approximately 91,000 acres of land delineated as the Agricultural Reserve in the 1980 *Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space*. The Residential Wedge is defined as all Wedge areas outside the Agricultural Reserve. The Agricultural Wedge and the Residential Wedge together constitute approximately two-thirds of Montgomery County's entire land area. The Wedge areas are bounded by the County's two major water resources: to the west by the Potomac River and to the east by the Patuxent River. Within the County, the Wedge areas are defined by the outer edges of the I-270 Corridor and by the Suburban Communities to the east and west of the Corridor. (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6  
THE WEDGE





## **The Residential Wedge Yesterday**

The 1964 General Plan recognized the importance of low density residential development in selected locations within the Wedge. The 1969 General Plan Update confirmed the 1964 General Plan recommendation. It called for the reservation of some land in the Wedge "to absorb future growth only when and if development needs exceed those projected by the General Plan." In 1969, the expectation was that development pressures would not exceed those projected by the General Plan until generations in the future. During the past two decades, however, development pressure has intensified beyond the expectations of the 1969 General Plan Update. This Refinement seeks to alleviate this pressure through a tighter definition of the Residential Wedge, its purposes, and acceptable land uses.

## **The Residential Wedge Today**

The existing Residential Wedge is characterized by predominantly one- and two-acre residential development and the occasional small-scale commercial use serving the local community. The Residential Wedge provides many park and recreational opportunities for its own residents and for residents throughout the County. This area buffers the Agricultural Wedge from the more intense development of the Corridor and Urban Ring. Within the Residential Wedge, opportunities for transit, large commercial development, and community amenities are limited when compared with the Urban Ring and the I-270 Corridor. The Residential Wedge contains a variety of centers ranging from Olney to the village of Potomac.

## **The Residential Wedge Tomorrow**

The future of the Residential Wedge contains many challenges. Some of the most important are:

- maintaining a low density residential character;
- permitting and limiting rural centers;
- protecting environmentally sensitive areas; and
- enhancing park and recreation linkages.

The Residential Wedge will come under pressure to develop more intensively in the future. To ensure that this area remains a low-density Residential Wedge and buffer for the even less intense Agricultural Wedge, steps must be taken to protect its character. Determining the proper scale of public services for a low-density but growing population will be a major challenge. Water, sewer, and transportation investments in the Residential Wedge will be limited. Within the Residential Wedge, public resources should be used to reinforce the centers.

In a limited number of areas, clustering large-lot housing into small distinct centers could be permitted by master plans. Such centers should be in logical places for community retail and service centers. This pattern will increase community identity, sociability, and pedestrian opportunities, preserve large amounts of open

space, and reduce environmental impacts caused by scattered development. Clustering residential development will allow the Residential Wedge to develop a greater range of housing types and a better utilization of land resources.

### **The Agricultural Wedge Yesterday**

The 1964 General Plan recognized an area within the Wedge appropriate for rural activities that would a) provide and protect large open spaces for recreational opportunities, b) provide a rural environment in which farming, mineral extraction, and other natural resource activities could be carried out, and c) conserve natural resources and protect the public water supply and recreational waters. The 1969 General Plan Update confirmed the 1964 General Plan recommendations. These recommendations responded to the intense real estate speculation and subdivision activity that had been occurring in the Agricultural Wedge.

### **The Agricultural Wedge Today**

The Agricultural Wedge contains farmland, rural centers, large parks, wildlife habitats, and forests. A limited number of industrial uses, such as mineral extraction and power generation, also exist in this area, along with public uses, such as composting facilities and landfills. The 91,000-acre Agricultural Wedge has been protected by using a preferential agricultural zone in conjunction with a transferable development rights system and other County and State easement purchase programs. As a result, the spread of suburbanization that once threatened the Agricultural Wedge has subsided.

Within the Agricultural Wedge are distinct and isolated rural centers. These centers typically serve the shopping and service needs of area residents. Historic village cores and traditional main streets add an air of charm, identity, and community pride to these rural communities. The rural character of these centers must be maintained and their expansion limited to meeting the needs of a rural lifestyle.

### **The Agricultural Wedge Tomorrow**

The future of the Agricultural Wedge contains both new and continuing challenges. Some of the most important of these include:

- maintaining agriculture as the preferred land use;
- limiting public and private non-agricultural uses;
- enhancing park and recreation linkages;
- directing development away from the Wedge; and
- protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

The Agricultural Wedge's rural character must be safeguarded, preserved, and protected to benefit future generations. To carry out this vision, public services to the Agricultural Wedge will be limited. Restricting local road improvements, the extension of water and sewer lines, and government and community services will help

preserve the rural character of the Agricultural Wedge. This means that public service extensions and road improvements will be provided to serve agricultural and safety needs consistent with the 1980 *Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space*. Such service extensions will not invite increased development potential above recommendations in the Functional Plan.

Agriculture will continue as the primary land use in the Agricultural Wedge. Non-agricultural uses must be limited. Necessary non-agricultural uses, however, will continue to be located in the Agricultural Wedge when deemed appropriate. When possible, the County will seek to expand its parkland and recreational opportunities. Taking steps to bolster environmental protection through planting trees and reducing chemical runoff will protect the Agricultural Wedge for future generations. Actions needed to preserve farmland in the future, beyond current measures, should be considered if deemed appropriate.

Agriculture is a dynamic industry whose success depends upon the ability to adapt to market forces. In addition to continued traditional farming, some transition to non-traditional farming practices is expected. Some fields that once grew corn and wheat may well be planted with fruits, berries, and vegetables to serve the regional marketplace. Greenhouses, hydroponic farms, and other intensive farming techniques may be more prevalent in the future as the industry responds to changing market needs, preferences, and policies. These changes are well within the Refinement's future vision for the Agricultural Wedge.

The Agricultural Wedge is an invaluable resource for Montgomery County beyond its agricultural use. Maintaining large amounts of rural open space protects the environment -- especially sensitive headwater areas, conservation areas, wildlife habitats, and flood plains -- from the impacts of development. It also serves as a "clean air shed" to cleanse the atmosphere, as well as a mechanism to protect the quantity and quality of water resources. A large share of urban flooding problems stem from a decrease in area-wide infiltration and retention due to paving and building development with the resultant increase in stormwater runoff. Urbanization, with its alteration of natural contours and permeability of the earth, also increases the irregularity of the surface water flow, lessening its reliability as a water supply source. While properly managed farmland is not as effective in protecting water supplies as thickly forested land, it is superior to dense and extensively paved suburban areas.

The Agricultural Wedge also provides recreational opportunities and preserves a rural lifestyle. It completes the housing density spectrum available within the County by providing the very lowest density housing for residents who make their living from the land or prefer a pastoral lifestyle. The County has a rich agricultural heritage, a blend of two cultural traditions, one stemming from the English planters who arrived in the 18th Century, the other from Pennsylvania German and Quaker farmers of the 19th Century. These two farming and cultural traditions are reflected in the blend of building materials and building types evident in the County. The Agricultural Wedge provides a rural living environment that is an important element in the diversity of Montgomery County land use. It is a viable land use alternative for those who desire such a lifestyle.

It is essential that the small-town appearance and feel of the rural centers be maintained. Reinforcing historic elements of rural centers, confining growth in the centers, and exercising opportunities to cluster development when appropriate are initiatives that will help further define the Agricultural Wedge in the future.

## **IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES FOR THE GENERAL PLAN**

The mere statement of goals, objectives, and strategies is of little importance unless these policy statements are implemented. As a long-range, County-wide plan that will guide innumerable decisions, the challenges of the General Plan's implementation are consistency and political will. Montgomery County is not generally shaped by one or two momentous decisions; it takes its shape from many small, incremental decisions which occur over time. Every decision that is made without asking, "What guidance does the General Plan offer?" is a lost opportunity toward achieving a coherent land use vision.

The master plans and sector plans are important vehicles for implementation of this Refinement. As such, each plan must address the manner in which it conforms to or departs from the guidance of the Refinement. One way to promote adherence to the Refinement is to explore alternative methods to integrate the goals and objectives of the General Plan Refinement into the deliberations that mold the individual master plans and sector plans.

### **Challenge 1: Maintaining Wedges and Corridors**

The vision of the Wedges and Corridors pattern requires protecting the Agricultural and Residential Wedges while encouraging high-density centers in the Urban Ring and the I-270 Corridor. Market forces will create pressure to intensify development in the Wedge areas. The challenge of maintaining the Wedge will be to resist intensification. The Wedge can be preserved if the most intense development is directed to the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor.

Relatively dense, diverse, and compact centers in the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor are necessary to have a dynamic and growing economy while protecting the Wedge. It will be a challenge to make these centers even more attractive to the market by providing them with the best possible public facilities, infrastructure, and design. As land becomes scarce, the revitalization and full development of existing centers must be a cause for celebration, not confrontation. It will be a challenge to ensure that those centers continue to be good neighbors and desirable places to live. That only will occur when issues such as compatibility and livability are given as much consideration as profitability.

### **Challenge 2: Guiding Market Preferences**

Some of the visions of the General Plan Refinement conflict with current market preferences. For example, the General Plan Refinement advocates increased intensity of development in the Urban Ring and the I-270 Corridor to accommodate growth, while preserving the Wedge areas, reducing traffic congestion, and protecting the environment. To achieve this greater intensity, the Refinement supports the development of multi-family housing, higher density employment locations, and alternatives to the single-occupant automobile. The market, meanwhile, prefers the privacy and spaciousness of the single-family detached house and the campus-style office park and wants to retain the convenience of the automobile.

Montgomery County must aggressively explore new approaches to guide these market preferences to ensure that the vision of the General Plan Refinement can be realized.

### **Challenge 3: Managing Limited Resources**

Montgomery County's supply of land, natural resources, and fiscal resources are limited and will continue to be limited in the foreseeable future. The prudent management of scarce resources is essential to the future well-being of the County. The need to do more with less will continue.

Careful management of scarce resources will be necessary. The General Plan Refinement recognizes the importance of public investment to implement the Wedge and Corridor concepts of the Refinement. One on-going challenge will be to determine the appropriate amount of flexibility for environmental constraints based on the location and density of a proposed development. When a decision is made to alter the environment to accommodate human activities, it must be managed in a way that permits development, yet preserves open space and the natural environment.

### **Challenge 4: Providing For Future Mobility**

Providing for future mobility, given both fiscal and environmental constraints, will be a significant implementation challenge. It will be very difficult for new transportation rights-of-way to match single-occupant vehicle demands, given current behavior patterns. Previously master planned rights-of-way and alternatives to single-occupant vehicles must be available in the future, if Montgomery County is to achieve the goals of this General Plan Refinement.

The accompanying map (Figure 7) depicts principal elements of the regional transportation system, existing and planned. The regional transportation system illustrates roads defined by the State of Maryland as those roads, existing and planned, that are classified by the State as state primary highways. (The State and Montgomery County maintain separate classification systems; County primary highways are not included in Figure 7.) Rail links, defined as those rail links in Montgomery County that are incorporated into current master and sector plans, are also illustrated in Figure 7. These road and rail connections to neighboring jurisdictions and locations are considered major components of a regional network that stretches far beyond Montgomery County's borders.

**These links are vital.** Without them, it would not be possible to make the economic and social connections that Montgomery County citizens and their neighbors depend upon. Moreover, these links are an integral part of the regional transportation system. Planned land use patterns and densities are determined to be reasonable based on assumptions that certain planned transportation links that are vital, both within and outside the planning areas, will provide the needed transportation capacity. Should these planned transportation links fail to materialize, the balance between land use demands and transportation supply of many master and sector plans could be undermined.

**These links are frail.** The present alternatives to these rights-of-way range from few to none; in operation, a single accident or breakdown can disrupt them for an intolerable length of time.

**These links are expensive.** Montgomery County has relied on federal and State funding for the vast bulk of transportation capital costs. Reliable funding sources are needed to expand the network to serve future growth.

Montgomery County residents and employers rely upon a regional transportation network for their economic well-being. Figuratively, closing the gates at Montgomery County's borders can hurt Montgomery County's residents and workers as much as their neighbors. Managing the existing transportation system and planning for its future is a mutual responsibility of neighboring jurisdictions that will require a frank exchange of ideas and decisive action by a regional partnership. Future transportation links will not be used as a justification to change the land use character of an area. This is particularly true for any east-west links which tend to traverse Wedge areas.

## **Challenge 5: Seeking Regional Solutions Through Regional Cooperation**

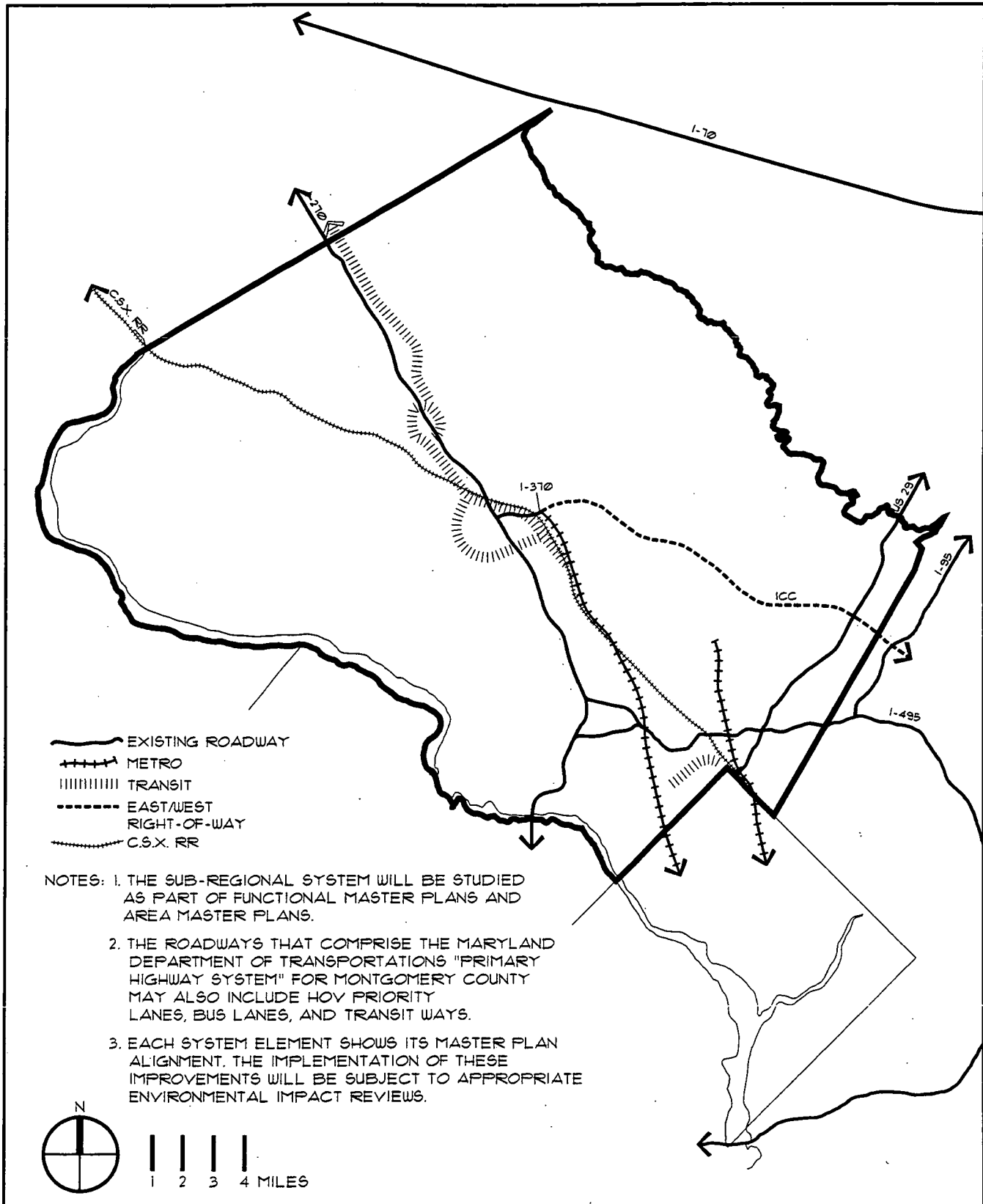
Montgomery County shares many major problems with its neighbors, including air pollution, water pollution, and traffic congestion. Major elements of the region's infrastructure cross jurisdictional boundaries. To solve regional problems effectively, new approaches must be explored to reach regional consensus.

The impediments to regional cooperation often lie in the inability of local government to overcome short-term interests to achieve long-term solutions. The existing regional framework often creates an environment better suited for competition than cooperation. There is competition for scarce federal and State funds. There is competition for clean, revenue-producing commercial activity. There is competition for the prestige and visibility of federal headquarters. This competition sometimes prompts decisions that can be justified on the grounds of economic gain, but questioned from a broader and longer-term fiscal or land use perspective.

Figure 7



# PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM





The fate of the individual areas that constitute the Baltimore-Washington region will become increasingly intertwined. The greater region will continue to influence Montgomery County's future and vice versa. The County cannot afford to be isolated in its thinking or actions. It must become a partner in coordinated decision making. Montgomery County, with its economic and cultural ties to Washington, D.C., and fiscal and political ties to Annapolis and Baltimore, is in an excellent position to work within these regional and state-wide frameworks.

## **Challenge 6: Encouraging Cooperation With Municipalities**

Although this Refinement is designed to guide land use activity in Montgomery County, consistent implementation will not occur without the cooperation of the municipalities that have planning and zoning authority within the County's borders. This Refinement invites an acceptance of its basic concepts by all entities involved in land use decisions. The County and the municipalities must cooperate to achieve the Refinement's vision.

## **CONCLUSION**

The General Plan Refinement presents a vision for the future, but it does not create that future. It is a call to action and invites participation in the planning process to help implement its vision. It is a call to form effective partnerships of public and private interests, rural and urban philosophies, and new and old ideas. It is an invitation to be guardians of Montgomery County's future.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

## INTRODUCTION

The General Plan Refinement consists of seven goals and associated objectives and strategies. Together they provide a future vision for Montgomery County and establish a frame of reference for decision-making to make that vision become a reality.

The General Plan Refinement recognizes the Wedges and Corridors concept as the basis for Montgomery County's land use pattern and acknowledges that implementation of the concept will occur through the master plan and sector plan process as well as other planning and legislative activities.

The 1969 General Plan Update contained five goals: Land Use, Circulation, Conservation, Environment, and Housing. The General Plan Refinement combines the Conservation and Environment goals; retitles Circulation as Transportation; retains Land Use and Housing; and adds Economic Activity, Community Identity and Design, and Regionalism for a total of seven goals. This chapter presents the proposed General Plan Refinement goals, objectives, and strategies. It also provides an overview of each goal that describes its scope, key concepts, changes from the 1969 General Plan Update, and interrelationship with other goals.

From time to time, the strategies in the Refinement include references to specific programs. These specific programs are examples illustrating the types of programs that might implement the goal. They are not intended to limit other approaches to achieving the goal, especially innovative techniques that may be developed subsequently.

The success of this General Plan Refinement will be dependent, in large part, upon an educational outreach. Full awareness of County land use policies will more likely result in the achievement of the related goals and objectives. Everyone benefits from knowing their history and the resources that reflect that history. County citizens need to understand the impacts of their individual decisions on the natural and man made environment. Opportunities should be found for educational outreach whenever and wherever feasible.

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# LAND USE

## **Scope**

Land use is the centerpiece of the General Plan Refinement. The Land Use Goal, together with the geographic components of the Wedges and Corridors concept, describes the intended pattern of development for Montgomery County. Goals such as Housing, Economic Activity, and Community Identity and Design expand on the Land Use Goal. Transportation serves land use while the Environment Goal provides guidance on ways to integrate land use with the natural environment.

## **Key Concepts**

Consistency with the Wedges and Corridors concept is fundamental to the Land Use Goal. The Land Use Goal sets out the basic pattern of development and describes the function of each geographic component. The precise location, specific nature, and intensity of land use are decided in subsequent planning processes. The Land Use Goal supports the variety and intensity of uses in the different areas necessary to continue to provide the County with a full range of housing and economic activity. The County is sufficiently large and strategically located to accommodate both urban and rural settings. It is important to the Wedges and Corridors concept that agricultural use be viewed as a valued and permanent land use. This General Plan Refinement rejects the notion that agricultural land preservation in the Agricultural Wedge is a holding use for future development.

The Land Use Goal in this Refinement is more evolutionary than revolutionary. It recognizes that the character of vast areas has already been established and will continue for the foreseeable future. Its concepts are intended to continue the existing trends where they are beneficial and to change their direction when they are not. They are intended to discourage incompatible intrusions into stable communities.

## **Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update**

Since 1969, a significant amount of Montgomery County land has been developed. Montgomery County is no longer just a bedroom community. The County has become an employment center in its own right. Land use intensities for employment areas have increased. Montgomery County's 1980 at-place employment was almost 25 percent higher than the 1969 General Plan Update forecast for that year. Actual employment had surpassed the Update's forecast for 2000 by 1990. Both the Update and the 1964 General Plan expected major growth in high-tech manufacturing jobs. Instead, the greatest growth was in office employment. As a result, Montgomery County is now a significant office market, well beyond what was anticipated in the earlier plans.

The 1969 Land Use Goal was to "achieve a balance among the various land uses insofar as the proper amount, types and distribution of each results in an environment and diversity of life styles that fulfill the requirements of the County residents." The amount of land in residential use has increased comparatively more than the number of housing units between 1960 and 1991. This means that Montgomery County's residential growth has, on the average, produced fewer housing units per acre than did development prior to 1960. Although many developments are more dense than 30 years ago, there have been a large number of houses built on lots of one-half acre and larger.

The new Land Use Goal strives for a variety of land uses. The desirable aspects of "balance" referred to in the 1969 Land Use Goal are achieved within the objectives. This Refinement calls for a fine grain mixture of housing and employment land uses in a wide variety of intensities.

The achievement of a wide variety of uses and densities is the key to the County's quality of life. When the County was first settled, farming appeared to be the only future for the County. At the beginning of the 1900s, the few rail and trolley residential communities were the exception rather than the rule. It was not until the 1940s that the first substantial retail activity, as well as the "new" housing form of garden apartments, began locating in the County. If the County had held to the narrow language of the 1964 General Plan, it would not have allowed for the transition from an emphasis on industrial jobs to office jobs. Establishing a framework for future development that is flexible but with limits will result in land uses that respond to the changing needs of the County and are consistent with the Wedges and Corridors concept.

## **Interrelationship with Other Goals**

### **Housing**

The Housing Goal calls for a mix of residential densities. Providing housing choices within the bounds of the Wedges and Corridors pattern is a key concept of the new Land Use Goal. The Housing Goal adds to the concept of land use balance by calling for a sufficient supply of housing to accommodate future workers. The vision for sufficient and infill housing near employment centers is consistent with the Wedges and Corridors concept. The Housing objective to concentrate higher density housing

in the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor clearly is in conformance with the Land Use objectives for those areas.

### **Economic Activity**

The call for a variety of employment types and intensities ranging from agriculture to high technology office space is echoed in the Economic Activity Goal.

Objective 6 of the Land Use Goal incorporates the land use aspects of the Economic Activity Goal. In addition, the Land Use Goal supports the centers that serve as the location for most economic activity. It calls for coordination of residential, employment, and retail development to create communities where people can live and work, and it specifies that "areas of greatest employment... density" are a high priority for allocation of public investment in community facilities.

### **Transportation**

Transportation facilities serve, and sometimes define, land use. There are numerous instances in Montgomery County where the land use abutting significant transportation facilities is purposefully held to a lower density than the transportation capacity alone would dictate. Density questions are resolved by a comprehensive review of the surrounding land uses and a long term vision of how the area should function in the future. Where identified in the appropriate master plan, sector plan or functional plan, this policy will continue in the future. Transportation access is only one factor and will not be the determinative factor in resolving land use density issues.

In addition, transportation facilities often serve as an organizing factor for land uses. Centers are located at appropriate crossroads. Edges of various types and intensities of land uses are often delineated by transportation facilities. In addition, the Transportation Goal reflects the call for mixed land uses because they have the potential to reduce total travel from what it would otherwise be.

### **Environment**

The strategic public acquisition of stream valley parkland as well as private efforts and easements to protect streams reinforce the Wedge pattern, provide environmental protection, and enhance community identity. The same is true of judicious extensions of the water and sewer systems. Concentration of land uses at transportation nodes enhances energy efficiency. Some particular land uses, such as mineral extraction and solid waste recycling facilities, demand special attention. Citizens and private businesses are also active in protecting the quality of the natural environment. The Environment Goal encourages the continuation of activities such as recycling, tree preservation, maintenance of stormwater management facilities, other stream protection, and proper disposal of hazardous materials by the private sector.

Maintaining the quality of the natural environment while expanding human habitation and commerce will be a continuing challenge.

## **Community Identity and Design**

The Community Identity and Design Goal adds detail to the community and centers concepts in the Land Use Goal. It calls for communities and centers that are functional, attractive, safe, and highly accessible. A positive community identity will add to the appeal of all centers and neighborhoods. The strength of centers and communities will be reinforced by compatible infill development, another Community Identity and Design strategy.

## **Regionalism**

This goal calls for cooperative land use planning with neighboring jurisdictions and municipalities. Long-term consistency and compatibility among the plans for municipalities, adjacent counties, and Montgomery County will be sought. This includes cooperative development of a method for agreement on the maximum expansion limits of municipalities in Montgomery County.

## **Compliance with Maryland Planning Act of 1992**

The Land Use Goal responds to six of the visions of the Maryland Planning Act. Development concentrated in suitable areas (Vision 1), is supported by the confirmation of the Wedges and Corridors land use policy and by the variety and intensity of uses recommended in the I-270 Corridor. The function of existing rural centers as the focus of activity for the surrounding countryside (Strategy 4E) responds to the requirement that growth be directed to existing population centers in rural areas (Vision 3). The accommodation of both urban and rural growth areas is responsive to conservation of resources (Vision 5) and encouragement of economic growth (Vision 6). The designation of priorities for open space, park, and recreation investments, and the preservation of important environmental features (Strategy 8A) are responsive to the requirement to protect sensitive areas (Vision 2) and to the requirement to address funding mechanisms (Vision 7).

## **LAND USE - GOAL, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES**

**Achieve a variety of land uses and development densities consistent with the "Wedges and Corridors" pattern.**

**Objective 1:**     *Direct the major portion of Montgomery County's future growth to the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor, especially to transit station locales.*

### **Strategies**

- A.     Channel higher density development to the Urban Ring and Corridor.
- B.     Emphasize compact development in the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor.
- C.     Foster transit serviceable land use patterns.
- D.     Balance the need to protect land in urbanized areas for natural eco-systems with the human need for compact communities.
- E.     Continue to ensure that centers are compatible in size, scale, and location with the intent of the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor.

**Objective 2:**     *Recognize the importance of identifiable centers of community activity at all levels: city, town, neighborhood, and rural community.*

### **Strategies**

- A.     Encourage a mix of uses to provide places to live, work, and shop in a relatively small area.
- B.     Require creative and marketable design techniques to provide compatibility with adjacent land uses.
- C.     Design streets in centers to better encourage street level activity and a safe pedestrian environment.
- D.     Limit new centers and expansion of existing centers to a size appropriate to the scale and character of the various communities throughout the County.
- E.     Use special care to plan for suitable transitions between residential communities and commercial centers.



**Objective 3:**     *Provide for moderate density residentially-based Suburban Communities located between the Urban Ring and Corridors, and the Wedge.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Continue residential and supporting commercial uses as the most important uses in the Suburban Communities.
- B.     Plan densities at the edges of Suburban Communities that are compatible with the character of the adjacent area.
- C.     Promote additional transportation options in the Suburban Communities.
- D.     Use care to protect important natural features, while continuing to develop at moderate densities.
- E.     Continue to ensure that centers are designed to serve local needs and are compatible in size, scale, and location with the intent of the Suburban Communities.

**Objective 4:**     *Preserve farmland and rural open space in the Agricultural Wedge.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Strengthen land use policies that encourage farmland preservation and rural open space preservation in the Agricultural Wedge.
- B.     Strengthen incentives and regulations to encourage agricultural uses and discourage development within the Agricultural Wedge.
- C.     Limit non-agricultural uses to those that are low intensity or otherwise identified in master plans.
- D.     Continue the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program as well as the County and State farm easement purchase programs as important elements of preserving farmland.
- E.     Continue the function of existing rural centers as the focus of activity for the surrounding countryside.
- F.     Ensure that rural centers primarily serve rural lifestyles and are compatible in size and scale with the intent of the Agricultural Wedge.
- G.     Continue agriculture as the preferred use in the Agricultural Wedge.

**Objective 5:**     *Maintain a low-density Residential Wedge to provide a large-lot housing resource and as one way to help protect sensitive environmental areas.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Use low-density residential zoning and parkland as the primary techniques to create a transition from more developed areas to the Agricultural Wedge.
- B.     Maintain large-lot residential uses as the predominant land use pattern in the Residential Wedge.
- C.     Limit the provision of community facilities and public services in the Residential Wedge, including the provision of community sewer and water.
- D.     Ensure that development bonus densities do not alter the low-density residential character of the area.
- E.     Explore the feasibility of a limited number of rural centers designed to serve local needs that are compatible in size, scale, and location with the intent of the Residential Wedge.

**Objective 6:**     *Provide zoned land for different types and intensities of housing and employment uses.*

**Strategies**

Objective 6 is an integral part of land use; consequently, it is included here. Refer to the Housing and Economic Activity Goals for detailed strategies on these subjects.

**Objective 7:**     *Coordinate residential land use patterns with employment and retail development to provide communities and neighborhoods where people can live and work.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Designate employment and housing areas within reasonable commuting distance of each other.
- B.     Increase floor area ratios when mixed uses are provided in the vicinity of transit stations.
- C.     Address the adequacy of area housing to meet the needs of employees when deciding on increases in employment floor area ratios.
- D.     Encourage multiple uses within office parks to assure employees convenient access to shopping, services, and open space.
- E.     Plan for an appropriate balance of employment and housing on a County-wide basis.

**Objective 8:**     *Provide a coordinated and comprehensive system of parks, recreation, and open space.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Give priority to open space, park, and recreation investments in areas with the greatest existing or proposed residential density and in areas with important environmental features.
- B.     Use open space, parks, and recreation facilities to shape and enhance the development and identity of individual neighborhoods, cluster developments, existing communities, and transitions between communities.
- C.     Integrate open space, parks, and recreational facilities into urbanized areas to promote public activity and community identity.
- D.     Plan for and encourage the provision of greenways to connect urban and rural open spaces, to provide access to parkland, to connect major stream valley park areas, and for recreational purposes such as walking and biking.

**Objective 9:**     *Recognize the importance of implementing the goals, objectives, and strategies of the Refinement when allocating public investments in community facilities.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Encourage a full range of community facilities, appropriately located in areas of greatest residential and employment densities, to serve the needs of County residents.
- B.     Coordinate the provision of public and private investments to assure orderly growth.
- C.     Use public investment to encourage revitalization of older neighborhoods and of residential and commercial structures in business districts.
- D.     Encourage private sector dedication and construction of community facilities at suitable locations.
- E.     Designate the location, size, and phasing of community facilities in a manner that enhances and reinforces the sense of community in the immediate neighborhood, while also meeting the service delivery needs of the County.
- F.     Designate appropriate locations for the public facility needs of County government in cooperation with the appropriate agency or department.

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# HOUSING

## **Scope**

The Housing Goal addresses Montgomery County's present and future housing needs. It focuses on housing type, quality, quantity, location, and affordability. Housing for less affluent members of the community is of special concern, but the goal, objectives, and strategies are designed to recognize the housing needs of all current and future County residents, including the full spectrum of ages, incomes, lifestyles, and physical capabilities. Providing housing opportunities for employees of all income levels who work in Montgomery County is of particular concern.

## **Key Concepts**

Consistency with the Wedges and Corridors concept is fundamental to the Housing Goal. The Refinement expects all residential development to conform to this pattern. It also expects consistency with master plans, recognizing them as an integral part of the General Plan. These constraints especially affect the appropriate locations for and types of affordable housing development and the sites and intensities of multi-family complexes.

## **Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update**

Since 1969, employment has doubled and a significant portion of the land appropriate for housing has been developed in the County. These two major changes have meant shifts in emphasis in the Housing Goal of the General Plan Refinement. Both the 1964 General Plan and the 1969 General Plan Update focused on "an orderly conversion of undeveloped land to urban use." Both advocated the creation of new towns and the use of clustering to achieve this goal. And both included housing as a major element of such development. Neither, however, emphasized the need for housing to support employment.

With the exceptions of Clarksburg and a few scattered but significant tracts of land in other areas, attention today is turning away from the development of vacant land. The current emphasis is on the maintenance, infill, and redevelopment of land, and appropriate increases in housing densities in the Urban Ring and the I-270 Corridor. This shift leads to increased attention to the attractiveness and compatibility of higher density housing.

The reduced supply of undeveloped land puts great pressure on land prices, leading to increased difficulties in providing affordable housing, even for middle income households. Some geographic areas of the County are especially affected. In addition, high-rise housing development raises unique financial feasibility issues and merits special attention. The General Plan Refinement addresses these issues.

The Refinement looks at the relationship of employment growth and the need for housing in a new way. In fact, the Housing Goal adds a new objective regarding the quantity of housing to serve employment in the County as well as the needs of residents at different stages of their lives. The new objective is designed to be flexible, relating the desirable amount of housing to the needs of residents at different stages of life and to the needs of workers in the County at different wage levels. It does not specify the means of achieving this objective nor does it attach a numerical target to it. Instead, the Refinement, while encouraging a balance between jobs and housing on a County-wide basis, leaves decisions about any changes in the numbers of housing units and/or jobs to master plans and other more local forums.

The General Plan Refinement adds a second new objective to the Housing Goal as well. This objective concerns the land use distribution of housing. It seeks to concentrate the highest density residential uses in the Urban Ring, I-270 Corridor, and especially near transit stations. Of the Housing objectives, this one most specifically reinforces the Wedges and Corridors concept.

The proposed Housing Goal deletes obsolete language from the 1969 General Plan Update. The 1969 General Plan Update Housing Goal reads as follows: "Stress the present quality and prestigious image of residential development in Montgomery County by further providing for a full range of housing choices, conveniently located in a suitable living environment for all incomes, ages and lifestyles." The General Plan Refinement reflects a consensus that a "prestigious image" is no longer needed as a housing goal for the County. The stock of prestigious housing has greatly increased in the past two decades and will remain as an important County asset without its mention as a prospective goal.

The new goal defines the word "quality" as referring to design and durability of construction. It drops the word "environment," which had been used to mean "neighborhood" or "surroundings" but is now more commonly used to mean "natural resources." Finally, it drops the words "preserve" and "established" from the objective concerning neighborhoods. This language was sometimes read as meaning that there should never be change to existing neighborhoods and that "established" neighborhoods, which many citizens interpret as being the most prestigious ones, should be protected more than others.

The General Plan Refinement adds other new strategies and, occasionally, new concepts to the Housing Goal. These include mixing residential densities in each planning area consistent with master plans, encouraging employer assistance in

meeting housing needs, and redeveloping existing properties when identified as appropriate in the master plan.

## **Interrelationship with Other Goals**

### **Land Use**

Housing is a major component of the Land Use Goal. Location and intensity cannot be separated from other housing issues, however, and are included in the Housing Goal as well. The Housing Goal addresses topics such as affordability, quality, and variety, which are not addressed by the Land Use Goal. The Housing Goal also encourages the search for improved methods of financing and staging residential construction, and it addresses the need to protect existing neighborhoods from unwarranted intrusions by encouraging compatible infill development with suitable transitions between areas of higher and lower density. The Land Use Goal addresses specific geographic issues. One of the most important of these is the definition of the Residential Wedge, which is a newly highlighted geographic component of the Wedges and Corridors concept. The Residential Wedge primarily contains one- and two-acre estate zoning. The Land Use Goal discusses its function as a housing resource for the County.

### **Economic Activity**

Housing and economic activity may be considered as two sides of the same land use coin; each constitutes a major resource for the other. Housing provides the consumers and employees to support economic activity, while economic activity provides the means of support for residential areas. In many cases, high quality housing was the impetus for economic development. The Housing and Economic Activity Goals are thus highly interrelated; each addresses the need for the other. This Refinement calls for greater integration of housing and economic activities. Insofar as the provision of housing is itself a major economic activity and depends on a stable economic climate, it is discussed in the Economic Activity Goal.

### **Transportation**

Access to a variety of transportation modes to promote efficient travel, especially to work, and to protect the environment is an underlying theme of many of the Housing objectives and strategies. Improved transportation and pedestrian access is one of several important reasons why the Housing Goal stresses the desirability of mixed uses. The Housing Goal encourages housing plans that foster transit serviceability and proximity of affordable housing to transit. It also emphasizes housing in close proximity to employment opportunities. These strategies are generally consistent and complementary to the Transportation Goal.

### **Environment**

The Environment Goal is a source of both support and potential conflict with the Housing Goal. The Environment Goal seeks to protect healthy and attractive surroundings for present and future County residents. The objectives also address the provision of the utilities and water and sewer service needed by local households. At the same time, some of the Environment objectives, such as preservation of trees,

wetlands, stream valleys, and biodiversity, can present major constraints to housing construction. Such issues must be resolved through the master plan and development review processes.

### **Community Identity and Design**

The Community Identity and Design Goal complements the Housing Goal. It guides the development of the community framework for housing and encourages lively, livable neighborhoods for County residents. It also encourages the preservation of historic resources, some of which are unique housing resources.

### **Regionalism**

Housing in Montgomery County is part of a regional market. Consequently, planning for residential uses in the County needs to consider the regional context. This is especially true of affordable housing, which is one of the greatest needs of the County and the regional housing market. Montgomery County will continue to cooperate with appropriate agencies to achieve an equitable distribution of affordable housing in the region.

### **Compliance with Maryland Planning Act of 1992**

The Housing Goal is responsive to several of the Maryland Planning Act's visions. Objectives 3, 5, and 6 respond to concentrating development in suitable areas (Vision 1). The Housing Goal encourages economic growth and also proposes that regulatory mechanisms be streamlined (Vision 6). In addition, strategies are included to assure the availability of adequate housing near employment centers (Objective 3), to ensure adequate housing choices and to encourage innovative techniques to reduce the cost of housing, including the examination of regulations and policies and development standards (Strategy 1E).



## **HOUSING - GOAL, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES**

**Encourage and maintain a wide choice of housing types and neighborhoods for people of all incomes, ages, lifestyles, and physical capabilities at appropriate densities and locations.**

**Objective 1:**     *Promote variety and choice in housing of quality design and durable construction in various types of neighborhoods.*

### **Strategies**

- A.     Permit increased flexibility in residential development standards to meet a broader range of needs and to foster more creative design.
- B.     Expand opportunities for a variety of housing densities within communities to offer more choice to a broader economic range of households.
- C.     Encourage the use of new and innovative housing construction techniques, including pre-fabricated components and housing units, to increase the supply and variety of housing types.
- D.     Explore the feasibility of rural centers in appropriate locations, such as the Residential Wedge.
- E.     Assess the development review process to determine ways to streamline the process and to encourage creative housing design.
- F.     Encourage both ownership and rental opportunities for all types of housing.

**Objective 2:**     *Promote a sufficient supply of housing to serve the County's existing and planned employment and the changing needs of its residents at various stages of life.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Provide adequate zoning capacity to meet the current and future housing needs of those who live or work in the County.
- B.     Explore ways to improve the economic feasibility of housing development as compared to employment-related buildings.
- C.     Phase mixed-use development so that housing is constructed in a timely fashion relative to other uses within the project.
- D.     Develop additional techniques to provide housing opportunities to meet the special housing needs of young workers, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.
- E.     Encourage employer assistance in meeting housing needs.
- F.     Develop new techniques to provide housing, including incentives.

**Objective 3:**     *Encourage housing near employment centers, with adequate access to a wide variety of facilities and services. Support mixed-use communities to further this objective.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Assure the availability of housing near employment centers.
- B.     Integrate housing with employment and transportation centers with appropriate community services and facilities, especially in transit stop locations.
- C.     Examine County regulations and policies for opportunities for mixed-use development; develop additional options.
- D.     Ensure a reasonable distribution of residential and commercial uses in mixed-use zones.
- E.     Explore changing development standards to allow the closer integration of employment and housing within mixed-use developments.
- F.     Encourage housing plans that foster transit serviceability.
- G.     Encourage the provision of appropriate indoor and outdoor recreational and community facilities in multi-family and single-family residential development.

**Objective 4:**     *Encourage an adequate supply of affordable housing throughout the County for those living or working in Montgomery County, especially for households at the median income and below.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Encourage the provision of low-, moderate-, and median-income housing to meet existing and anticipated future needs.
- B.     Distribute government-assisted housing equitably throughout the County.
- C.     Plan affordable housing so that it is reasonably accessible to employment centers, shopping, public transportation, and recreational facilities.
- D.     Encourage well-designed subsidized housing that is compatible with surrounding housing.
- E.     Assure the provision of low- and moderate-income housing as part of large-scale development through a variety of approaches, including the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit program.
- F.     Preserve existing affordable housing where possible.
- G.     Encourage development of affordable housing by the private market.
- H.     Designate government-owned land, other than parkland, that meets appropriate housing site selection criteria for future housing development.
- I.     Identify County policies that have a burdensome effect on the cost of housing; find alternatives if possible.
- J.     Encourage the provision of innovative housing types and approaches, such as single-room occupancy housing and accessory apartments, to meet the needs of lower income single persons and small households.
- K.     Develop zoning policies that encourage the provision of affordable housing while protecting the Wedges and Corridors concept.

**Objective 5:**     *Maintain and enhance the quality and safety of housing and neighborhoods.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Discourage deterioration of housing through well-funded code enforcement, neighborhood improvement programs, and other appropriate techniques.
- B.     Ensure that infill development and redevelopment complements existing housing and neighborhoods.
- C.     Mix housing with other uses with special care in ways that promote compatibility and concern for residents' needs for safety, privacy, and attractive surroundings when introducing new uses into older neighborhoods.
- D.     Provide for appropriate redevelopment of residential property when conditions warrant.
- E.     Protect residential neighborhoods by channeling through traffic away from residential streets and discouraging spill-over parking from non-residential areas.
- F.     Use special care to plan uses at the edges of high-density centers that are compatible with existing neighborhoods.

**Objective 6:**     *Concentrate the highest density housing in the Urban Ring and the I-270 Corridor, especially in transit station locales.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Designate appropriate, specific locations in sufficient amounts for higher density housing and mixed-use development in master plans.
- B.     Modify County zoning regulations and other policies to improve the feasibility and attractiveness of higher density housing.
- C.     Encourage air rights development in areas designated for higher densities.
- D.     Encourage development of affordable, higher density housing in the vicinity of transit stations.

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# ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

## **Scope**

Economic Activity is a new goal introduced in this General Plan Refinement. Discussion of economic activity in the earlier General Plans focused on employment and was included as part of the Land Use Goal. During the Refinement process, a clear consensus emerged that economic activity was of sufficient importance to merit a separate goal.

The new goal views employment as a primary indicator of economic activity. This section addresses jobs located in Montgomery County and goods and services available for purchase here. Government employment is addressed along with private sector and nonprofit employment in this section. Issues such as tax policies are generally excluded as being outside the scope of the General Plan Refinement.

## **Key Concepts**

The intensity and location of economic activities are, of course, expected to conform to the Wedges and Corridors concept. In addition, the goal supports implementation of a strategic economic development program for the County, which would also guide economic activity.

The 1964 General Plan and the 1969 General Plan Update encouraged the development of "new towns" and Corridor Cities. Both were expected to include residential and employment land uses. In addition, the 1964 General Plan included the objective that "the growth of employment centers should closely parallel the growth of population." And the 1969 General Plan Update included the objective, "provide an environment capable of attracting new employment to the region."

Montgomery County has experienced substantial economic growth in the intervening years and has matured as an economy. As a result, the General Plan Refinement introduces several new concepts to its employment philosophy. It does

not set a specific target for economic growth, but instead, calls for a "healthy" economy and "a stable and competitive business climate." Montgomery County is also expected to be a "world class center" of business and technology. A new objective gives special emphasis "to retain and enhance" existing businesses throughout the County. Overall, this section views economic activity as a quality of life issue and as one important source of revenue for the County.

The General Plan Refinement also offers some guidance about the types of businesses the County should particularly encourage. These include corporate headquarters, knowledge-based industry, biotechnology research, and public/private institutions. Federal research and regulatory agencies, small businesses, and incubator businesses are also specified. "Knowledge-based industry" refers to the wide spectrum of businesses that produce and distribute information or depend on or expand human knowledge. These range from many aspects of the communications industry to financial to political or scientific "think tanks." The definition is very broad. At the same time, the General Plan Refinement guides the County away from the intense industrial types of use that were expected at the time of earlier General Plans.

## **Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update**

The decision to include a separate Economic Activity Goal reflects the change in the character and extent of economic activity in Montgomery County since the 1960s. During this time, the number of jobs in the County has more than doubled. The federal government now employs a smaller proportion of the resident labor force, and although many of the emerging businesses work with or under contract to the federal government, the County's economy is more diversified. In addition, the County now imports as many workers as it exports each day.

The amount of land used for employment has grown more rapidly than expected by the 1969 General Plan. Employment land use has also been more intensive than envisioned and oriented toward office and service uses rather than the anticipated industrial and manufacturing uses. Retailing has followed residential growth. In addition, women have entered the work force in record numbers. The increased number of dual income families affects the way the County does business by increasing demands for day care, compatible transportation options, and increased weekend and evening business, shopping, and cultural opportunities.

The amount of non-residential land and its density have land use and planning implications for the County. The 1964 and 1969 Plans recognized the importance of economic activity and employment in their narrative discussions and as Land Use objectives, but did not devote a separate goal to them. These Plans expected the County to become more self-sufficient economically, but were primarily oriented toward the issues common to bedroom suburbs, such as housing and commuting.

## **Interrelationship with Other Goals**

### **Land Use**

The Land Use Goal addresses the appropriate locations for employment activities and other economic activity. Its objective on public facilities directs the focus of government spending on infrastructure, which also influences the placement of employment uses. Because it strongly affects the geographic location of economic activity, the Land Use Goal both supports and constrains the Economic Activity Goal.

### **Housing**

Housing provides the work force for employment and the consumers to buy goods and services. The two goals are so intimately related that the Economic Activity Goal includes the objective "provide opportunities for the current and future work force of Montgomery County to live in Montgomery County." Residential uses may create constraints to economic activity, however. The relationship requires careful attention to compatibility issues which must be addressed through the master plan and development review processes.

### **Transportation**

Like housing, transportation is basic to economic activity. It is the means of getting workers to jobs, and goods and services to their markets. A primary focus of this General Plan Refinement is to generally encourage the location of economic activity near transportation centers to facilitate orderly and efficient conduct of business. Individual master plans may recommend that certain areas with high levels of transportation access are inappropriate for economic activity due to community impact, environmental impact, or other considerations.

### **Environment**

The Environment Goal offers a number of potential conflicts with the Economic Activity Goal. Its objectives may be constraints to business locations and densities, particularly if a business works with hazardous material, produces emissions which might get into the air or water, or is noisy. Parking lots raise special environmental concerns because of the amount of impervious surface and the composition of the stormwater runoff. The General Plan Refinement calls on development to mitigate potential negative impacts in order to balance the human need for places to live, work, and play with the need to protect the environment. Any conflicts must be resolved by master plans and the development review process.

### **Community Identity and Design**

Economic activity contributes to Community Identity and Design, both as part of the fabric of communities and as a source of revenue for streetscape and other amenities. Ensuring compatibility and connections between employment uses and other uses that define communities is particularly important.

## **Regionalism**

In many ways, Economic Activity is a regional issue. As part of a larger, regional community, the County's own expenditures and the businesses it attracts often cannot be reasonably considered in isolation from those of its neighbors. Montgomery County enjoys both the benefits of its location in a major economic region and the competition from other jurisdictions in the region. The Regionalism Goal addresses the kinds of coordination needed to facilitate the necessary communication between jurisdictions.

## **Compliance with Maryland Planning Act of 1992**

The Economic Activity Goal responds to four of the Maryland Planning Act's visions. Strategies 2B and 2C, regarding the revitalization and maintenance of existing businesses and fostering the agricultural industry, relate to concentrating development in suitable areas (Vision 1) and directing growth to existing population centers in rural areas (Vision 3). Encouraging economic growth (Vision 6) and methods to provide funding mechanisms to support other Planning Act visions (Vision 7) are also echoed throughout the Economic Activity section, particularly in the strategies of Objective 5. Strategy 6A addresses the Act's requirement to encourage streamlining, innovation, and flexibility.



## **ECONOMIC ACTIVITY - GOAL, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES**

**Promote a healthy economy, including a broad range of business, service, and employment opportunities at appropriate locations.**

**Objective 1:**     *Encourage new and existing businesses that complement the County's strengths and serve the County's needs.*

### **Strategies**

- A.     Promote Montgomery County as a "world class" center for research, development, and technology, as part of a strategic economic development program that complements the Wedges and Corridor concept.
- B.     Ensure that land use decisions support the County's economic development objectives of retaining and attracting headquarters, knowledge-based industry, biotechnology research, institutions, and federal research and regulatory agencies.
- C.     Provide flexibility in land use and other policy decisions to accommodate entrepreneurship, incubator businesses, and developing technologies.
- D.     Develop land use and other policies that encourage and protect small businesses, minority businesses, and special population businesses.
- E.     Develop land use and other policies that support and expand land use opportunities for professional and technical education in the County.
- F.     Develop programs to ensure that an adequate supply of housing for workers, with the skills needed by employers, will be available in future years.
- G.     Recognize that non-profit organizations may provide an appropriate means of achieving this objective.

**Objective 2:**     *Retain and enhance existing businesses consistent with master plans.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Provide opportunities for the growth of existing businesses and federal agencies.
- B.     Facilitate revitalization and maintenance in business areas.
- C.     Foster the agricultural industry, particularly activities in the Agricultural Wedge.

**Objective 3:**     *Provide opportunities for the current and future work force of Montgomery County to live in Montgomery County.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Ensure adequate housing opportunities and choices for employees in the County at all income levels.
- B.     Encourage mixed-use development, including employment and residential uses.
- C.     Encourage public/private partnerships to create opportunities to live and work in the same community.
- D.     Provide appropriately zoned land to accommodate a diversified array of employment activities which will provide work opportunities for people with a variety of educational backgrounds.
- E.     Encourage business support for employee housing.

**Objective 4:**     *Provide zoned land for a variety of types and intensities of employment activities at appropriate locations.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Concentrate employment activities where there is adequate infrastructure, with an emphasis on sufficient public transportation.
- B.     Designate and encourage an adequate and conveniently located supply of land for local retail and services in proximity to businesses and residences.
- C.     Create and enhance appropriate connections between employment activities and residential communities.
- D.     Plan for the locational needs of a wide range of businesses, including start-up and recycling-based businesses.
- E.     Provide access to employment areas in such a manner as to avoid introducing large volumes of traffic onto local residential streets.
- F.     Discourage development which would preempt master planned intensification, and prohibit development which would conflict with other master plan recommendations.
- G.     Provide zoning for a limited number of sites for appropriate manufacturing and industrial activities in suitable locations that support the County's other well-established knowledge-based industries.

**Objective 5:**     *Foster a stable and competitive business climate through appropriate land use decisions.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Provide public and foster private investments to ensure timely, appropriately located, and orderly economic development.
- B.     Coordinate land use decisions with the County's management of resources to facilitate economic vitality and quality of life.

**Objective 6:**     *Concentrate the highest density employment in the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor, especially in suitable transit station locales.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Continue to assess the development review process to determine ways to streamline the process and to encourage economic growth within the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor.
- B.     Designate the highest density and the most flexible zoning in transit station locales to attract development.
- C.     Promote the advantages of higher density locations to existing and future employers considering locations in Montgomery County.

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# TRANSPORTATION

## **Scope**

The Transportation Goal of the General Plan Refinement places renewed emphasis on quality of life considerations, sustained mobility, and appropriate access for Montgomery County's residents and workers. Emphasis is placed on the relationship of Transportation to other goals of the Refinement, especially in the areas of land use, housing, environment, and economic activity. This goal also addresses the need to operate more efficiently in moving people and goods from, to, through, and within Montgomery County. The Refinement focuses not only on transportation infrastructure - its type, scale, location, and extent - but also on the public policies needed to meet mobility, access, and quality of life considerations.

## **Key Concepts**

While some increases in traffic congestion may be a fact of life for the future, maintaining mobility is essential. Making better use of the transportation system already in place, getting more people into trains, cars, and buses in future rights-of-way, and creating an environment conducive to walking and biking are all necessary elements to achieve an affordable balance between the demand for, and supply of, transportation. Even with a more efficient use of the existing transportation system, additions to the network will be necessary to support this Refinement's Land Use Goal. Public safety is a primary concern in the design of transportation facilities.

## **Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update**

The 1969 Circulation Goal was to "provide a balanced circulation system which most efficiently serves the economic, social, and environmental structures of the area." The General Plan Refinement renames the goal to the Transportation Goal. One important conceptual change in this goal is the movement away from accommodating travel demand and towards managing travel demand and encouraging the availability of alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle. The Refinement effort thus

abandons phrases such as "carry the required volume" and "accommodate travel demand" because the demand for single-occupant vehicle travel will usually outstrip the County's ability to meet it.

The concept of transit has broadened to include provisions for high occupancy vehicles. Largely because of increased affluence and changes in commuting patterns, the rate of drive-alone commuting is higher today than at the time of the 1969 General Plan Update. An important challenge for the future will be making transit more price- and time-competitive with drive-alone travel. As was recognized in the 1969 General Plan Update, it is vitally important that the emerging multi-modal transportation network be well-connected and that transferring among the component parts be as convenient as possible.

The General Plan Refinement supports walking and biking as legitimate means of travel beyond the health, recreation, and aesthetic dimensions ascribed to them by the 1969 General Plan Update. Expanding the current network of sidewalks and bike paths and bringing related land uses within walking distance of each other are steps in the right direction.

The General Plan Refinement also acknowledges the importance of strategic transportation pricing in managing future transportation demand. Subsidies, user fees, and taxes all can be used to balance out some of the cost differentials that have traditionally been found among the different modes of transportation.

## **Interrelationship with Other Goals**

### **Land Use**

Realizing Montgomery County's potential for economic growth, while preserving its natural resources and making efficient use of its fiscal resources, means supporting the compact development of mature, developing, and future centers. Concentrations of mixed-use centers are well suited to the transitways that are planned for the County's future. According to surveys, per capita work trips have decreased and non-work trips have increased. Developing land use planning strategies that co-locate uses typically requiring multiple trips will reduce the length of, and demand for, non-work trips.

### **Housing**

The Housing Goal supports many of the concepts in the Transportation Goal. Encouraging the development of housing near transit stops and ensuring that housing in mixed-use zones is developed in a timely manner will reduce travel demand for single-occupant vehicles and will provide greater opportunities for transit. One Housing strategy proposes to "encourage housing plans that foster transit serviceability." The concern for development of affordable housing near transit and near employment opportunities will provide County residents with the "choices in the modes and routes of travel" stated in a Transportation objective and will provide greater accessibility to jobs, recreation, and shopping for all County residents.

## **Economic Activity**

A well-functioning transportation system is a necessity to keep businesses viable and to attract new firms and residents to the County. Several challenges lie ahead. One is to decide how transportation use should be paid for. Should transportation be treated more as a utility, in which users of the system pay for the goods they consume, or should public funds provide more support to recognize the general benefits of moving people and goods? Another challenge is how to retain and attract employers while asking them to take increased responsibility for managing transportation demands.

## **Environment**

The original Circulation Goal was conceived before the first clean air legislation was enacted in 1970. Subsequent transportation, health, and environmental legislation provide strong incentives and sanctions to attain and maintain prescribed limits on vehicle emissions, provide flexibility on how transportation money is spent, and modify regional institutional arrangements for meeting these concerns.

The potential for conflict among Refinement goals is probably greatest between Transportation and Environment. The construction and use of transportation systems often have environmental costs. A major challenge will be to create transportation options that harmonize with the environment yet match the demands placed on the transportation network by the planned land use. One such example, supported by the General Plan Refinement, is a concept that has emerged from the increased environmental sensitivities of the 1980s and 1990s known as greenways. Greenways are linear corridors of open space, such as the County's stream valley parks, that protect the natural environment. Walking and biking trails, often a feature of greenways, provide opportunities to forge connections that are alternatives to motorized travel between highly developed and less developed areas of the County.

## **Community Identity and Design**

The Transportation Goal also looks at communities, understanding that they are often adversely affected by transportation improvements, through-traffic, excessive speeds on local streets, and noise. Neighborhood streets are part of a larger network that depends upon a high degree of interconnectedness to function properly. The General Plan Refinement acknowledges the importance of the detailed, small-scale network of sidewalks that connects residents to each other's homes and to nearby shopping centers, schools, and other community facilities. Creating communities conducive to walking and biking will help improve the sense of community within the County's neighborhoods.

## **Regionalism**

The Transportation and Regionalism Goals are closely interrelated. The existence of interstate highways, state roads, and regional transit networks within the County ensures that Montgomery County must coordinate with other jurisdictions in the region on transportation issues. Open dialogue and coordinated planning region-wide is the prelude to laying down pavement and rails, or establishing transport



policies. Clean air and transportation legislation provide strong incentives for regional planning. Seeking and advancing shared interests must overcome divisive trends, such as complaints of "external" traffic clogging County roads, that have provided natural incentives for acrimonious finger pointing across borders.

### **Compliance with Maryland Planning Act of 1992**

The Transportation Goal seeks to conserve resources (Vision 5) by encouraging public and private efforts to reduce peak travel demand (Strategy 3A), devise land use patterns to encourage shorter trips (Strategy 3B), and to manage the supply of parking (Strategy 3E). The requirement to provide funding mechanisms to achieve other Planning Act visions (Vision 7) is addressed by Strategies 1E and 1F. Objective 7, preventing degradation to the overall quality of air, land, and water, addresses stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay (Vision 4).

## **TRANSPORTATION - GOAL, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES**

Enhance mobility by providing a safe and efficient transportation system offering a wide range of alternatives that serve the environmental, economic, social, and land use needs of the County and provides a framework for development.

**Objective 1:**     *Develop an interconnected transportation system that provides choices in the modes and routes of travel.*

### **Strategies**

- A.     Identify and protect rights-of-way for the future transportation system.
- B.     Give priority to improving east-west travel.
- C.     Encourage regional, State, and federal agencies to implement transportation system improvements, including accessibility to other jurisdictions in a manner which is consistent with County goals.
- D.     Ensure that transportation system designs recognize the mobility needs of people with disabilities and other special populations.
- E.     Continue to require the private sector to share in the cost of improving the transportation system.
- F.     Embrace cost effective technologies, policies, and techniques that promote efficiency and safety in the transportation system.

**Objective 2:**     *Provide appropriate access to, around, and within communities by using a full range of travelways.*

### **Strategies**

- A.     Assure that access is provided to each parcel of property in the County.
- B.     Establish network plans for all modes of transportation.
- C.     Match land uses and intensities to appropriate travelways.

**Objective 3:**     *Improve the efficiency of the existing and planned transportation systems by managing its supply and demand.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Encourage public and private efforts to reduce the peak demand for travel through means such as flexible work schedules, off-site work arrangements, pricing, and telecommuting.
- B.     Devise mixed land use strategies that encourage shorter trips.
- C.     Increase the occupancy of automobiles and transit through such means as pricing, high-occupancy-vehicle lanes, and other priority treatments.
- D.     Establish transportation management districts and other programs that reduce the number of vehicle trips.
- E.     Manage the supply and price of parking to encourage transit use, car-pooling, walking, and biking.

**Objective 4:**     *Provide a transit system in appropriate areas of the County that is a viable alternative to single-occupant vehicle travel.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Scale the extent and frequency of transit service in proportion to its potential benefit.
- B.     Give priority to establishing exclusive travelways for transit and high occupancy vehicles serving the Urban Ring and Corridor.
- C.     Establish development patterns that support public transportation.
- D.     Locate buildings, roads, bikeways, and walkways, and manage automobile traffic to provide convenient access to transit services.
- E.     Provide for station locations that minimize the number and/or duration of transfers.
- F.     Provide transit users with shelters, paved waiting areas, lighting, schedule information, and safe pedestrian crossings at significant transit locations.
- G.     Make transit use more price- and time-competitive with auto use.

**Objective 5:**     *Reduce traffic delays on the road system without eroding the quality of life in surrounding communities, unless alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle are available.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Provide a sufficient number of major highways, arterial roads, and primary streets to attract through traffic away from local streets.
- B.     Allow designated rustic County roads in the Agricultural Wedge to remain in their present condition, except for maintenance and safety projects.
- C.     Facilitate the efficient flow of vehicles and minimize delay through means such as the use of a County-wide signal system and advanced traffic management technology to minimize the need for more road rights-of-way.
- D.     Give preference to underpasses rather than overpasses in developed areas where the construction of a grade-separated interchange is deemed necessary.

**Objective 6:**     *Provide pedestrians and bicyclists safe, direct, and convenient means of travel for transportation and recreation.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Consider safe bikeways and walkways as integral parts of all land development and transportation projects.
- B.     Provide a bikeway network that serves a variety of needs for a variety of users.
- C.     Increase pedestrian and bicyclist access to and within neighborhoods, commercial centers, school grounds, and other public places.
- D.     Encourage reduced building setbacks that result in convenient walking distances between the public rights-of-way and buildings.
- E.     Provide secure bicycle storage at all major transit stations, retail areas, employment centers, and other activity centers.
- F.     Encourage pedestrian circulation by managing through traffic in centers and safe crosswalks.

**Objective 7:**     *Prevent degradation to the overall quality of the air, land, and water in the provision and use of the transportation system.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts on wetlands, watersheds, forests, and other natural resources.
- B.     Give priority to transportation projects and policies that promote efficient use of energy and attain clean air standards.
- C.     Support land use decisions by encouraging alternatives to the internal combustion engine and the use of fossil fuels.
- D.     Protect neighborhoods from excessive road noise.
- E.     Support land use decisions by reducing negative impacts on water quality from water and chemical road runoff and from pollutants emitted by the internal combustion engine.

**Objective 8:**     *Maximize safety in the use of the transportation system.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Design roads to allow drivers to react safely and to allow safe travel through neighboring communities.
- B.     Provide improved travelways and transfer points that enhance visibility, personal security, and safety, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- C.     Enable automobiles, pedestrians, and bicyclists to coexist safely on roads and streets in residential and commercial areas.
- D.     Provide safe, well-lit, and clearly marked pedestrian crossings where needed.
- E.     Eliminate at-grade railroad crossings on major roadways.

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# ENVIRONMENT

## **Scope**

The Environment Goal addresses a variety of issues regarding the impact of the environment on human activity and the impact of human activity on the environment. These impacts are obvious at times, such as when a forested tract is cleared, and subtle at other times, such as when groundwater is contaminated by leaking underground storage tanks. The identification and minimization of potential impacts from human activity are important aims of the Environment Goal.

## **Key Concepts**

The Environment Goal seeks to: a) manage impacts of human activity on the environment, b) conserve natural resources to maintain a stable and healthy ecosystem, and c) protect public health and safety. Achieving these aims is clearly a challenge for planning and development and in the daily lives of residents and workers. However, the Refinement recognizes the importance of good planning as a means to mitigate negative cumulative impacts of human activity on the environment.

Awareness and understanding of the environment have increased dramatically since the approval of the 1969 General Plan Update. Today, there is a better understanding of how the environment affects human health, how human behavior affects the environment, and how the quality of air, land, and water affect each other. Although a great deal is known, there is still the need to learn more, to monitor conditions to increase understanding of these complex issues, and to be more environmentally sensitive.

## **Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update**

The 1969 General Plan Update addressed environmental issues under the Environment Goal and the Conservation Goal. The 1969 objectives and guidelines also included topics such as the preservation of historic buildings and places, which are now covered in other goals in this General Plan Refinement.

The 1969 General Plan Update used the word "environment" in a more general sense than this Refinement does. Included in its possible meanings were natural resources, historic preservation, aesthetic concerns, community design, and orderly growth. The guidelines related to these subjects have been included in other goals. This Refinement refers to "environment" as natural resources and processes, such as water, air, trees, wildlife, and flooding. In addition, this goal includes the provision of water and sewer service, hazardous materials, and solid waste disposal, which are designed to protect human and environmental health.

A number of new subject areas are addressed under the Environment Goal. The new topics include environmental stewardship, wetland protection, biodiversity, tree preservation, hazardous materials, and energy conservation. In addition, greater emphasis has been placed on stormwater management to reflect its increased importance in the development process. Environmental stewardship focuses on the need to be more aware of the implications of actions on the environment and to take action to care for the environment.

The environmental context in which land use decisions are made has changed since 1969 and will continue to change in the future. The early 1970s were landmark years for federal environmental legislation, which prompted both the State and local governments to take additional actions to protect and clean up the environment. The 1970 Clean Air Act (amended in 1990), the 1970 National Environmental Policy Act, the 1973 Clean Water Act (amended in 1977), and the 1973 Endangered Species Act are part of the federal environmental programs framework. Federal legislation, such as the far-reaching Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments, has further defined the nation's environmental goals in the 1990s. State and County environmental programs have increased through legislation such as the Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992. Resulting programs strengthen the [including] protection of the Chesapeake Bay, Potomac and Patuxent Rivers, wetlands, tree cover, and other sensitive environmental features.

Wetland protection has become an increasingly important concern in environmental protection since the 1969 General Plan Update. The role of wetlands in maintaining water quality and wildlife habitat has been acknowledged and protected by the adoption of County, State, and federal regulations.

As areas urbanize and suburbanize, the natural balance of plant and animal life can be disrupted and certain species displaced. The concept of maintaining biodiversity in the County acknowledges the value of retaining a self-sustaining variety of plant and animal life.

The preservation and replacement of the County's forests have become a more important issue. The County was initially deforested in the 19th century as agriculture spread; subsequently, forested lands had increased by the mid-1960s. More recently, suburbanization has reduced the amount of forested land to what it was during the 19th century. The County currently has one of the lowest amounts of forest cover in the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area. This is due to suburbanization and agricultural use. Recent efforts to preserve trees have included new requirements on the preservation of existing stands of trees and the inclusion of trees along all new roads.

Hazardous materials are used on a daily basis throughout the County by businesses, government installations, and individuals. Their proper use, storage, and disposal have become an increasing concern in protecting human and environmental safety.

The conservation of energy is a much greater concern now than it was in 1969. Since then, the world experienced an "oil crisis" in both 1973 and 1979. Each of these highlighted the dependence on non-renewable sources of energy. Controlling energy usage now plays an important role in meeting clean air standards. In 1969, the General Plan Update focused on the aesthetics of clean air as it relates to enjoying life and property. This Refinement focuses on the need to clean the County's air to protect public health as well.

## **Interrelationship with Other Goals**

### **Land Use**

A number of environmental concerns are reflected in the Land Use Goal. One of these is the need to balance the protection of land in urbanized areas for natural eco-systems with the need for compact communities. Another is the continued usage of water and sewer service and other government services as a means to discourage development in certain portions of the County.

### **Housing**

The Housing Goal, objectives, and strategies advocate the use of flexible design standards and the concentration of development to minimize environmental impacts. Current regulations have been designed, in part, to generally allow for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas while maintaining the number of potential dwelling units permitted on individual properties.

### **Economic Activity**

The Economic Activity Goal, objectives, and strategies address environmental concepts, such as the concentration of development and the management of the County's resources to facilitate economic vitality and quality of life. This recognizes that environmental quality is important for business and residents. The environmental impacts of economic activity are addressed in the land use, transportation, and environmental sections.



## **Transportation**

The provision of transportation facilities and environmental protection are often considered mutually exclusive. They need not be. The Transportation Goal recommends that degradation of the overall quality of the air, land, and water should be limited when transportation facilities are constructed. In addition, the Transportation Goal recommends the increased usage of and sensitivity to the planning of non-automobile transportation facilities, including sidewalks, bikeways, and transit facilities. Increased awareness of the environmental impacts of the County's transportation system is an important step in resolving the air quality problems facing the region.

## **Community Identity and Design**

The Environment Goal seeks to protect natural resources, while the Community Identity and Design Goal seeks to integrate some of these natural features into communities to provide focal points, character, and improved aesthetic surroundings. One of the balances that must be reached is how to integrate these natural features with development without destroying them. These features can include streams, significant trees, and scenic views.

## **Regionalism**

Many of the environmental challenges facing the County are of a regional nature and require coordinated and complementary solutions by all contributing jurisdictions. On issues such as air quality, the geographic extent of the areas of non-attainment identified by the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment extends beyond the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and includes 12 states and the District of Columbia in an area now referred to as the Northeast Ozone Transport Region. Ozone creating emissions in Virginia affect the County's air quality, which in turn affects Baltimore's air quality, eventually resulting in high ozone levels in Maine. Within the Washington, D.C. region, air quality is addressed by the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee. While Montgomery County may be able to do its part on its own, this alone would not solve the County's air quality problems, nor those of its neighbors. The success of efforts to ensure clean air is clearly dependent on regional cooperation.

Other environmental efforts that are at a regional scale include the Chesapeake Bay clean-up, which is affected by six states from Virginia to New York, and the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers clean-up efforts.

## **Compliance with Maryland Planning Act of 1992**

The Environment Goal responds directly to Vision 2 of the Maryland Planning Act, which requires that sensitive areas be protected, and to the Act's requirement for a "sensitive areas element" in comprehensive plans. It responds to the protection of sensitive areas by providing strategies to encourage public and private protection and restoration of the environment and natural resources. It also recommends reduction in resource consumption and the protection of natural resources through identification, public acquisition, conservation easements, public education, and citizen involvement.

**In addition, Objectives 3, 4, 5, and 6, which relate to water quality and plant and animal diversity, address stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay (Vision 4). As steward of Montgomery County's water resources, which eventually flow into the Chesapeake Bay, Montgomery County will fulfill its role as steward of the Bay itself.**

## **ENVIRONMENT - GOAL, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES**

**Conserve and protect natural resources to provide a healthy and beautiful environment for present and future generations. Manage the impacts of human activity on our natural resources in a balanced manner to sustain human, plant, and animal life.**

**Objective 1:**     *Promote an awareness of environmental issues and instill a commitment to environmental stewardship.*

### **Strategies**

- A.     Encourage public and private efforts to conserve, protect, and restore the environment and natural resources.
- B.     Encourage environmentally prudent behavior in individual decisions on consumption; travel; yard maintenance; location of homes, work, and other activities; and resource management.

**Objective 2:**     *Preserve natural areas and features that are ecologically unusual, environmentally sensitive, or possess outstanding natural beauty.*

### **Strategies**

- A.     Protect natural resources through identification, public acquisition, conservation easements, public education, citizen involvement, and private conservation efforts.
- B.     Connect parks and conservation areas to form an open space and conservation-oriented greenway system.
- C.     Require open space dedications in new subdivisions that maximize protection of stream valleys and other sensitive environmental features.
- D.     Ensure that development guidelines are reviewed periodically to make certain that they are environmentally sensitive and reflect current technologies and knowledge of the environment.
- E.     Limit construction on soils and slopes not suited for development.

**Objective 3:**     *Protect and improve water quality.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Implement a comprehensive surface and ground water quality monitoring program.
- B.     Limit impacts on water quality by designating compatible land uses near water resources.
- C.     Identify and protect recharge areas for aquifers, individual wells, headwater springs, and seeps through land use and innovative control techniques.
- D.     Control potentially harmful discharges of point and non-point source pollutants to protect water quality through land use policies.
- E.     Manage activities in the Potomac and Patuxent River basins above water supply intakes to prevent pollution that might endanger the region's water supply.
- F.     Prevent or mitigate thermal pollution that may be harmful to aquatic life and the general ecology of the County's waters through land use policies.
- G.     Control runoff and flooding by minimizing impervious surfaces.
- H.     Continue and improve soil conservation.
- I.     Require and enforce sediment control during public and private development.

**Objective 4:**     *Conserve County waterways, wetlands, and sensitive parts of stream valleys to minimize flooding, pollution, sedimentation, and damage to the ecology and to preserve natural beauty and open space.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Identify and protect wetlands and other sensitive parts of watersheds.
- B.     Continue parkland acquisition in key stream valleys.
- C.     Limit the potential damage to life and property from flooding.
- D.     Prohibit development too close to streams, in the 100-year ultimate floodplain, and in flooding danger reach areas of dams, unless no feasible alternative is available.
- E.     Maintain the natural character of drainage areas in the immediate vicinity of streams, rivers, and lakes.
- F.     Plant and retain trees and other vegetation near streams.
- G.     Minimize impacts from construction and operation of public and private facilities located in stream valleys, buffers, and floodplains; first priority should be given to preserving natural areas (avoidance), second priority to mitigation, and third priority to replacement with functional equivalents.
- H.     Develop programs to rehabilitate damaged streams and then to maintain them.
- I.     Mandate "no net loss" of wetlands.

**Objective 5:**     *Maintain water quality and minimize the impacts of sedimentation and erosion through a comprehensive stormwater management program.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Encourage the use of techniques to minimize the need for structural stormwater management facilities, particularly in areas that are not already adequately served.
- B.     Encourage the use of vegetated swales or other appropriate techniques, wherever practical, rather than enclosed pipes or concrete swales to carry stormwater runoff, to maximize infiltration, and to minimize water velocity and erosion.
- C.     Use redundant stormwater management facilities to minimize the impact of new development on water quality.
- D.     Require the use of Best Management Practices and stormwater management facilities, with particular emphasis during construction and in agricultural areas, and limit waivers where on-site controls are feasible, practical, and appropriate.
- E.     Ensure stormwater management adequate to treat water quantity, temperature, sediment loadings, and concentrated pollutants from surface runoff.
- F.     Develop a County-wide maintenance program for public stormwater management facilities and require private maintenance of private facilities.

**Objective 6:**     *Preserve and enhance a diversity of plant and animal species in self-sustaining concentrations.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Determine and protect the land and water masses and linkages necessary to support a diversity of species in self-sustaining concentrations.
- B.     Identify areas that have the most species needing protection.
- C.     Plan a system of parks, conservation areas, subdivision open space, and easements to support a diversity of species in self-sustaining concentrations.
- D.     Ensure protection of environmentally sensitive habitats and unbuildable land through the master plan and development review process.
- E.     Minimize forest fragmentation to protect habitat continuity.

**Objective 7:**     *Protect and improve air quality.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Attain federal air quality standards.
- B.     Promote improved air quality through land use planning and regulation; where possible, consider the effects of land use proposals on air quality.
- C.     Identify land use policies that support environmentally preferable travel alternatives.
- D.     Develop land use policies to save energy and improve energy conservation.

**Objective 8:**     *Increase and conserve the County's forests and trees.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Identify and designate forest preservation and tree planting areas.
- B.     Ensure forestland conservation, tree planting, and related maintenance in all new development.
- C.     Provide for increased tree cover and maintenance in urban and suburban areas and along transportation rights-of-way.
- D.     Encourage private and public landowners to protect existing trees and to plant additional environmentally appropriate and native trees on their properties.

**Objective 9:**     *Provide an adequate, self-sufficient, well-monitored, and ecologically sound system for the management of Montgomery County's solid wastes.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Provide appropriate industrially zoned land necessary to support present and future waste management facilities, including local recycling.
- B.     Consider land use implications when developing a comprehensive solid waste management program.
- C.     Minimize the environmental and other negative impacts of facilities that handle waste products through proper siting and design.
- D.     Explore source reduction of waste through means such as charging collection fees in proportion to the amount of trash produced.
- E.     Increase and promote the public and private use of recycled goods so that the amount of land devoted to land fills is minimized.
- F.     Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions in devising regional waste management strategies so that land use efficient solutions to waste management can be achieved.



**Objective 10:**    *Protect residents and workers from unacceptable noise levels.*

**Strategies**

- A.    Recommend noise-compatible land uses in areas where noise levels are unacceptable for certain land uses.
- B.    Minimize noise impacts on new development through noise reduction techniques in site design, such as the strategic location of noise tolerant land uses, building location, and orientation.
- C.    Encourage protection of existing development from unacceptable noise through noise walls, berms, or other techniques.

**Objective 11:** *Provide and maintain high quality water and sewerage systems with minimal environmental impacts, constructed in advance of or in conjunction with development in a cost effective manner.*

**Strategies**

- A. Coordinate and stage the extension of community water and sewer service through the *Ten-Year Water and Sewerage Plan* consistent with the master plan and sectional map amendment process.
- B. Coordinate water and sewer extensions with other public facilities.
- C. Locate and design water and sewage transmission lines, pumping stations, and other facilities to minimize environmental and odoriferous impacts and provide visual screening.
- D. Address existing health problems in areas outside the *Ten-Year Water and Sewerage Plan* service area through local community water and sewer systems or other techniques.
- E. Designate controlled access water and sewer mains in selected areas to facilitate master planned development or to address existing public health problems.
- F. Acquire sufficient land for future water storage, water treatment, sewage treatment facilities, buffers, and sludge disposition and processing.
- G. Ensure a sufficient emergency supply of water by providing land for lakes or other storage facilities.
- H. Designate land use patterns that minimize impacts on watersheds and, where possible, reduce the need for additional sewage pumping stations.
- I. Encourage landscaping with native and drought resistant plants to conserve water.
- J. Review size, location, and environment and fiscal impacts of sewer and water facilities in connection with land use decisions in master plans.

**Objective 12:**    *Minimize the adverse effects of public utilities on the environment and on public health and safety.*

**Strategies**

- A.    Maximize the use of common rights-of-way for utility and transportation systems wherever feasible.
- B.    Ensure that new utilities are installed underground as required by the Maryland Public Service Commission.
- C.    Develop a plan in cooperation with the Maryland Public Service Commission to convert overhead utility lines to underground installation where feasible.
- D.    Ensure reliable utility service by minimizing potential disruptions from natural events and human interference through protective measures such as the proper location of transmission facilities.
- E.    Minimize the impact of sewer and water lines on streams.

**Objective 13:**    *Promote the efficient use of energy and plan for the County's long-term energy needs.*

**Strategies**

- A.    Encourage the location of housing, employment, and shopping in proximity to each other and to transit facilities and services to reduce travel distances and promote energy conservation.
- B.    Consider energy conservation practices during master plan, subdivision, site plan, and mandatory referral review.
- C.    Encourage environmentally preferable alternatives to fossil fuel consumption, such as solar power.
- D.    Promote the development of facilities that encourage cycling, walking, and the use of transit and other high occupancy vehicles.

**Objective 14:** *Provide for the wise use of mineral resources and protect life and property from associated hazards.*

**Strategies**

- A. Locate and plan for possible extraction of marketable mineral resources.
- B. Ensure that extraction of mineral resources is compatible with neighboring land uses and that adequate operating controls are provided.
- C. Require adequate buffering between extraction operations and their neighboring land uses.
- D. Require the restoration or adaptive reuse of extraction sites.

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# COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND DESIGN

## **Scope**

Community identity is the collection of attributes that makes a community unique, makes it "home," and separates it from other places. Physical, social, ethnic, political, geographic, economic, symbolic, and other characteristics contribute to perceptions about communities. Communities occur at many levels. They range from a few neighboring houses to the County as a whole, and in some instances, to the entire region. They are realized by attitudes and actions which bond people together.

Individual citizens can play a key role in establishing a community's identity. Although the role of government in creating community is limited, Montgomery County can establish the framework on which communities can evolve. This goal is one which guides the County's physical development so that it is conducive to the nurturing of community pride, social interaction, and identity.

## **Key Concepts**

The Community Identity and Design Goal directly supports the Wedges and Corridors concept as well as individual local area master plans. The key effect of the General Plan Refinement on community identity and design is to encourage attractive development that provides opportunities for social interaction. The creation or maintenance of centers and the preservation of historic and cultural resources expand these opportunities. One of the challenges is to create or enhance the identity of areas that are already developed. Another is to ensure that public safety is addressed. The Community Identity and Design Goal applies to existing and developing areas.

## **Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update**

Community Identity and Design was not an explicit goal in the 1964 and 1969 General Plans, although both concepts were implicit throughout the Plans. The 1969 General Plan Update stated "each community should have an identity, which can be created by imaginative design." Many of the Refinement's objectives update concepts from the 1969 General Plan Update. Two objectives were added that deal with the need to recognize, reinforce, or create each community's unique character and identity, and to ensure that centers are attractive, functional, visible, and highly accessible to their communities.

A number of strategies introduce new concepts to the General Plan Refinement. These include the appropriate preservation of cultural landmarks and the use of local place names for public places and buildings, such as the post offices and schools, to reinforce community awareness. The library system already uses this place name strategy.

## **Interrelationship with Other Goals**

### **Land Use**

Community identity is recognized by the Land Use Goal through the variety of community types found and planned in the County. In addition, the Land Use Goal encourages the compact concentration of residential and employment areas and recommends that development be channeled to under-utilized land in existing developed areas. In particular, areas around transit stations are identified for increased growth. The concentration of density in centers can create an active focal point for communities.

In addition, the Land Use Goal reinforces past practices of using the park system as a community amenity as well as a major element in the organization of new communities. Parks promote and focus some public activities that are elements of community identity.

### **Housing**

Social interaction is encouraged by the Housing Goal through the integration of residential and employment areas, and the provision of conveniently located community facilities. The design and location of housing benefits from the use of community design principles. In addition, the Housing Goal recommends that indoor and outdoor recreation/community facilities should be included in new and established residential communities to promote social interaction and community identity.

## **Economic Activity**

The provision of public and private services and facilities can improve a community's appearance and identity and is related to the economic health of the County. In addition, the general health of the economy can positively or negatively affect the perception of communities. Economic activity also has the potential to provide or help finance amenities which create community identity and spirit.

## **Transportation**

A positive community identity requires interaction among its members. The Transportation Goal addresses the need for interconnection by a variety of modes of travel. The design and location of transportation facilities can improve or detract from a community's appearance as well as physically draw together, connect, divide, or isolate a community. The Transportation Goal emphasizes that increased pedestrian accessibility is an important element in the development of functioning centers and that excessive through traffic can split communities and limit community interaction.

## **Environment**

Another way to improve community identity is through sensitivity to the environment during the development process and in the daily lives of residents and workers. This can result in more attractive surroundings in which the community takes greater pride. The concept of stewardship, in which people act responsibly towards protecting or improving the environment, can be a beneficial element in a community's identity. Respect for the natural environment and the protection of environmental landmarks aid in establishing a unique character in developing areas.

## **Regionalism**

A positive regional image brought about by regional cooperation can enhance local community identity.



## **COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND DESIGN - GOAL, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES**

**Provide for land use patterns and land uses that offer ample opportunities for social interaction and promote a strong sense of community through public and private cooperation.**

**Objective 1:**     *Recognize, reinforce, or create each community's unique character and identity.*

### **Strategies**

- A.     Reinforce each community's natural and man-made qualities and features.
- B.     Create clearly identifiable community boundaries.
- C.     Use an area's geographic or historical place name for consistent identification and community identity.
- D.     Ensure that infill development is compatible with the positive character and development and redevelopment patterns of the neighborhood.
- E.     Design and locate public spaces and buildings to reinforce and express the community's unique character.
- F.     Enhance or create focal points, views, vistas, and other landmarks.
- G.     Require attractive transportation system elements and surroundings to reinforce community identity.
- H.     Improve pedestrian and bike routes by streetscape enhancement and road design guidelines.
- I.     Provide extensive and attractive pedestrian walkways and gathering places that facilitate access to stores, schools, and other destinations.
- J.     Require transportation system elements to instill a sense of location, orientation, and destination at an appropriate scale for their functions.
- K.     Implement programs for removing unattractive elements such as illegal signs, graffiti, litter, utility poles, and billboards.

**Objective 2:**     *Ensure that centers are attractive, functional, visible, safe, and highly accessible to their communities.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Create or enhance community gathering points at convenient locations.
- B.     Provide centers to reflect each community's unique character.
- C.     Design transit facilities that are attractive and functional to create or enhance centers.
- D.     Require compatible arrangements of buildings, activities, and open space to provide pleasant, attractive, and safe gathering places.
- E.     Provide adequate locations for a variety of community activities.
- F.     Encourage appropriate signage to identify communities.

**Objective 3:**     *Identify and preserve significant historic, scenic, and cultural features and promote art in public areas.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Evaluate historic resources for inclusion in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.
- B.     Preserve appropriate sites with their environmental settings and districts that are:
  - Representative of a period or style,
  - Architecturally important,
  - Locations of important events or activities,
  - Associated with important persons,
  - Archaeological sites,
  - Cultural landmarks, or
  - Of historic or cultural value.
- C.     Protect historic sites permanently.
- D.     Encourage the preservation, restoration, and use of historic sites and community landmarks to foster community identity.
- E.     Use financial incentives to minimize the impacts of maintaining and restoring historic properties.
- F.     Promote art and cultural opportunities at appropriate public and private locations.
- G.     Encourage compatible development that highlights and enhances historic resources in development or redevelopment near historic resources and in and around historic districts.

**Objective 4:**     *Strive for government facilities with service boundaries that foster a sense of community.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Locate and co-locate, where feasible, community-based facilities in identifiable centers of communities.
- B.     Provide services that meet the changing needs of the communities they serve.
- C.     Encourage the U.S. Postal Service to use local place names for post office addresses.
- D.     Encourage public agencies (including schools) to consider local place names for public facilities.
- E.     Explore whether some school sites could be planned to accommodate facilities necessary for other community programs, including but not limited to community center facilities, park/school combinations, and daycare.

**Objective 5:**     *Create and maintain attractive, functional, and safe communities utilizing innovative approaches and regulatory processes.*

**Strategies**

- A.     Utilize master plans and studies to establish the framework for communities.
- B.     Provide design guidance for existing and planned communities that promotes opportunities for social interaction while recognizing the need for private space.
- C.     Utilize zoning, subdivision, and other regulations to foster interaction, community cohesiveness, and community identity.
- D.     Ensure compatible design for special exception uses.
- E.     Encourage an appropriate mix of land uses to make neighborhoods more self-sufficient.
- F.     Use various organizational structures, such as development districts, to provide facilities and services for designated areas.
- G.     Provide design guidance for existing and planned communities that promotes safety.

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# REGIONALISM

## Scope

The Regionalism Goal focuses on the need for cooperation among the different governments, both within the County and around it, to address regional problems that are best solved collectively. There are current and future challenges associated with air quality, water quality, water and sewer service, transportation, land use, and other issues. The need for regional cooperation has long been recognized, but is often difficult to achieve. Nonetheless, the value of achieving a strong region cannot be underestimated. Montgomery County exists in a global marketplace where the emphasis is on regions rather than smaller jurisdictions. In the global marketplace, the first decision is to come to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, the second is to come to Montgomery County. Strong regional cooperation is necessary not only to solve regional issues more efficiently and effectively but to be more competitive in the global marketplace.

Montgomery County is part of many regions that are defined according to the issues. One of the regions that changes over time is the U.S. Census Bureau's Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). This region includes Washington, D.C. and the surrounding jurisdictions from which workers commute. The Baltimore and Washington MSAs are scheduled in 1993 to become a single Consolidated MSA (CMSA) with approximately 6.3 million residents, making it the fourth largest metropolitan area in the country behind New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Other regions are determined by natural features, such as the Potomac River Drainage Basin and the Chesapeake Bay Drainage Basin, while still others are defined by political choice, such as the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

## **Key Concepts**

The Regionalism Goal addresses cooperation with other jurisdictions, regional planning and implementation, and the resolution of common concerns with the municipalities in the County. The focus on cooperation is driven by the need to maintain a healthy economy, conserve the regional environment, resolve conflicts, and inform the public about regional efforts. The General Plan Refinement recognizes that Montgomery County is part of an interdependent regional fabric whose infrastructure needs often cross jurisdictional lines. An "infrastructural interdependence" will continue to grow throughout the region.

Regional planning and implementation are required to address regional issues. The strategies include the need to plan adjacent areas in abutting jurisdictions on similar schedules with compatible recommendations, the development of regional priorities, and the development of regional standards on relevant issues.

Finally, the resolution of conflicts between the County and municipalities is an important element of coordinating efforts within the County. Many conflicts have been solved in the past to varying degrees of satisfaction on both sides. In many cases, both the municipality and the County have benefitted. As the County has become more developed, there have been increasing levels of conflict between municipalities and the County regarding the annexation of land into municipalities. A principal concern is the consistency between the short- and long-range land use and transportation plans for annexed properties. Concern over these types of inconsistencies resulted in State legislation that requires consistency between the uses permitted in the municipality and in the County for five years unless approved by the County Council. Five years, however, is a very short time when considering long-term land uses. A similar concern is the differences between the County's growth control mechanisms, most notably the Annual Growth Policy (AGP), and those of the municipalities. Annexation to circumvent AGP restrictions can result in inadequate public facilities within the municipality and in the County. Another concern is that there is little, if any, guidance from municipalities regarding their current view of maximum expansion limits.

## **Changes from the 1969 General Plan Update**

The Regionalism Goal was not contained in the 1969 General Plan Update. The increased recognition that regional cooperation is essential to resolve some of the issues facing Montgomery County warrants the explicit inclusion of regionalism as a goal. During the public participation portion of the Refinement effort, it became clear that each of the distinct goals of the Refinement has regional aspects and that the concept could have been an objective within each goal. However, due to the wide-reaching application of the regionalism concept, it is included as a separate goal.

## **Interrelationship with Other Goals**

### **Land Use**

The regional aspects of the Land Use Goal stem from the Wedges and Corridors concept for the entire region. The Wedges and Corridors concept identified Washington, D.C. as the center of employment and social activity. As housing, retail, and employment activities moved successively into the suburbs, Washington's share of regional housing and employment decreased. As a result, many residents in the region now live and work in Montgomery County or live in the County and work in other suburban jurisdictions. While the regional pattern is no longer exclusively focused on downtown Washington, D.C., the Wedges and Corridors concept is still an effective tool to minimize the sprawl that would otherwise occur. The 1964 General Plan considered a sprawl pattern for the development of the County, but rejected it since "past experience with sprawl demonstrates that a more compact and stable form of development is necessary." Sprawl, if looked at in the context of current development patterns, still holds many of the same disadvantages from a regional and local governance perspective. Just as the Wedges and Corridors concept guided the planning and development of the Metrorail system, overall land use patterns on a regional level need to be known to plan and provide needed infrastructure.

### **Housing**

The Housing Goal focuses on maintaining existing housing and communities while encouraging the development of new communities. The desirability of the Washington region in general and Montgomery County in particular as a place to live has a large impact on the economics associated with buying or constructing housing in the County. The success of the regional economy has been a key ingredient in median housing prices that are among the highest in the nation. This success has also created an increased need for affordably priced housing for those who live and work in the region. Montgomery County has responded with a number of programs to increase the supply of affordable housing for County residents. The housing market, like the job market, is regional in nature. Homes in Montgomery County compete with homes in surrounding jurisdictions and throughout the greater Washington region. Further, many of the County residents' needs are served by regional facilities such as water and sewer service, Metrorail, and interstate highways.

### **Economic Activity**

The regional linkages of the Economic Activity Goal are based in the regional nature of the economy. The County's economy is in part a subset of the Washington area's economy as well as the national and international economies. Montgomery County offers advantages for some sectors of the economy, such as biotechnology, government contracting, and other office-based industries, while offering disadvantages for others, such as heavy manufacturing. Fostering the growth of existing Research and Development and high technology business includes associated manufacturing, assembly, warehousing, and distribution activities. The benefit is greater opportunity and higher paying jobs for various segments of the population. At the same time, the County's economy competes with other jurisdictions in the region for

preferred businesses. This competition often serves as a primary obstacle in achieving solutions to regional problems. Few jurisdictions are willing to forego potential tax revenue to another jurisdiction.

### **Transportation**

The transportation system is a regional one that includes the County's system. The planning, construction, operation, and maintenance of the transportation system requires coordination with municipal, county, state, regional, and federal transportation agencies to ensure the proper planning and operation of the whole system.

### **Environment**

The region's environment is influenced by activity within the County. While some environmental impacts are local, most environmental conditions affect the region and require coordinated action throughout the region to resolve. Among these issues are air quality, water quality, water and sewer service, and solid waste. A number of interjurisdictional agreements and organizations have been established to address specific environmental problems. Recent legislation at the State and federal levels requires a new degree of cooperation among governments to address problems that are beyond the ability and authority of local governments to solve.



## REGIONALISM - GOAL, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES

Promote regional cooperation and solutions to problems of mutual concern to Montgomery County, its neighbors, and internal municipalities.

**Objective 1:**     *Develop mechanisms for effective and meaningful regional planning and implementation.*

### Strategies

- A.     Support efforts to develop a regional economic development strategy to maintain a healthy economy and economically viable region.
- B.     Work with adjacent and internal jurisdictions to plan concurrently and compatibly.
- C.     Advocate the provision of regional facilities necessary to support locally planned development.
- D.     Encourage the development of priorities in addressing regional problems.
- E.     Attain and maintain regional standards for matters of regional significance.
- F.     Encourage regional economic development marketing as opposed to interjurisdictional competition within the region.
- G.     Use both proven and innovative techniques for the resolution of regional conflicts.

**Objective 2:**     *Foster cooperation between the County and the municipalities and seek resolutions of common concerns.*

### Strategies

- A.     Work with the County's municipalities to achieve consensus on regional issues and solutions.
- B.     Work with the County's municipalities to develop agreement on maximum expansion limits and orderly growth decisions.
- C.     Develop procedures to ensure long-term consistency.

Resolution No.: 12-1351  
Introduced: November 2, 1993  
Adopted: November 2, 1993

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
SITTING AS A DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PORTION  
OF THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL DISTRICT  
WITHIN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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By: District Council

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Subject: Approval of Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives

Background

1. On February 27, 1993, the Montgomery County Planning Board transmitted to the County Executive the Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives. This Plan provides the framework for the physical development of Montgomery County. The goals, objectives, and strategies are intended to be a guide for decision making affecting the future of Montgomery County. This Plan also complies with the seven visions of the Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992.
2. The Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives amends the General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties (1964) and the 1969 Updated General Plan for Montgomery County (approved in 1970).
3. On April 23, 1993, the County Executive transmitted to the District Council the Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives, as prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Board, with comments concerning plan recommendations.
4. On June 8, 1993, the County Council held a public hearing regarding the Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives. The Refinement Plan was referred to the Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee for review and recommendation.
5. On July 8, 1993, July 22, 1993, and September 20, 1993, the Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee held worksessions to review the issues raised in connection with the Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives. Several revisions to the Refinement were recommended by the Committee.

6. On October 5, 1993, October 12, 1993, and October 19, 1993, the County Council reviewed the Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives and the recommendations of the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee.

Action


The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, sitting as the District Council for that portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following resolution:

The Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives dated January 1993, is approved with revisions. Council revisions to the Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives are identified below. Deletions to the text of the Plan are indicated by [brackets], additions by underscoring.

**GENERAL**

All figures and tables are to be revised where appropriate to reflect County Council changes to the Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives. The text is to be revised as necessary to achieve clarity and consistency, to update factual information, and to convey the actions of the County Council. All identifying references pertain to the Planning Board (Final) Draft of the General Plan Refinement Goals and Objectives, dated January 1993.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

  
Kathleen A. Freedman, CMC  
Secretary of the Council

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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